

Happy New Year ★ ★ ★ Happy New Year ★ ★ ★

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SOCCER

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Ned Zelic's Auxerre Team Shot



Plans needed by fans
By BOB BROOKS

1997 is as good as here. Only three more years to the Olympic Games and this time the circus is coming to our great island continent.

The majority of the events will be held in the Sydney Basin, the Conurbation which is based on Australia's first city. Many of you will choose to travel to the Games to enjoy the World Game's latter stages and maybe take in a couple of other sports.

It'll be like a magnet, the period from September 15 to October 1, 2000. Sydney is going to be a very busy and hectic place for those two weeks. Excitement and joy will fill the air.

However the Groups competition will take place in Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide. A wonderful opportunity to take in live games without having to travel to Sydney.

Sydney residents will have to travel to see games in the preliminaries or Groups or hope that they'll be on TV. For this to happen there will have to be big change compared to Atlanta. Apparently the host television broadcaster failed to screen even one game from the Football tournament in the USA.

'Absurd, impossible, ridiculous' you may well cry but that was the situation with the Atlanta Games.

No wonder FIFA were upset with the treatment of the World Game at the 95 Olympics. Firstly all games were held outside of Atlanta and TV broadcasts of the great game were not made in the USA.

These aspects need to be carefully examined and resolved for the Sydney Games. Indeed the Men's and Women's Finals will be held in the Harbour City. However, the broadcasting of all Soccer games needs to be addressed.

Certainly the newly developed Perth Glory fans need to be catered for using television. They can't all travel to Hindmarsh Stadium in Adelaide because there wouldn't be room for local fans!

Maybe cable television will be the only way to see the great game but to encapsulate two tournaments into just fourteen days, makes even this option virtually impossible to organise.

It would make sense to withdraw the football tournaments from future Olympic Games and to organise Under 23 World Cups. These would then be major sporting events in their own right.

They would be highly marketable to sponsors, advertisers and television networks. A spread of three or four weeks makes more sense than the two of the Olympics. Fans wouldn't have to miss any of the action. Certainly Australia would be in contention to hold the events every twenty or so years.

There are many avid Olyroo fans in Sydney who would want to follow the Australian Men's team. By 2000 it is more than likely that the Women's Aussie team will also attract its own fan club.

Supporters of both of these teams will have to travel to Adelaide, Melbourne, Canberra or Brisbane, in the first week of the Olympics, in order to follow their favourites.

By doing this, these people will miss the opportunity to attend any other live events. Careful thought and organisation will have to go into Sydneysiders lives during the Games in order to maximise the enjoyment they should bring.

So start your plans now!

ERICSSON CUP MATCH REPORT CANBERRA BREAKS DUCK AT LAKERS EXPENSE

CANBERRA 1 BY GRAHAM COOKE SOUTH MELB 1

Canberra Cosmos defender Paul Dee clutched an ice pack to his head after his team's 1-0 Ericsson Cup win over South Melbourne Lakers at Bruce Stadium on Saturday night but claimed the pain was worth it. "Even a broken leg would feel good after a win," Dee said.

It was Canberra's first win of the season, achieved at the 13th attempt, and Dee was its principle engineer. His persistence was rewarded with the only goal of the game, and he backed it up with an all action display in defence.

Ivan Kelic went close twice in the early stages for South Melbourne, missing with a header from point blank range off a George Goutzioulis cross and then forcing a fine save from Cosmos's goalkeeper Anthony Giannasca.

Those misses looked costly after the home side took the lead in the 21st minute, when Dee pressured Alex Kuzmanovic into passing back to his goal keeper Michael Petkovic.

Dee raced onto the ball and connected at the same time Petkovic grabbed it, but Dee's touch spun it into the net and he raised his arms in delight.

Giannasca, deputising for Danny Milosevic who is on Young Socceroo duty, was Canberra's saviour on several occasions in the second half, his best effort was a diving save to take a fierce low drive by Vaughan Coveny.

Cosmos substitute Tony Lemezzina did well to set up Norman Kelly, but Petkovic arrived a moment ahead of the

striker to save.

Dee said he believed Canberra had played with more urgency than in past games, a thought echoed by his coach Mike Lyons.

"It's been a long time coming," Lyons said. "But we did the hard work and got the result, whereas in other games the luck has not just gone our way."

The sight of Canberra Cosmos coach Mike Lyons pacing the sideline during matches has become familiar to local supporters over the last two seasons, but he was missing from the 1-0 win over South Melbourne on Saturday.

Instead he had relegated himself to the stand at Bruce Stadium, where he could be seen taking pages of notes and making numerous calls with his mobile phone.

"I wanted to see the game from a more elevated position," he said afterwards. "Really, the worst spot for getting an overall idea of what's going on is down on the sideline."

Assistant coach Walter Valeri, who sat on the bench, confirmed the boss was keeping in close contact with what was going on. "I think I would have seen a call at least once every 10 minutes during the game," he said.

Canberra Cosmos: Giannasca, Dee, Kelly, Armstrong, Perinovic, Baxter, Koch, Mazis, Sorras, Juric, Moreno (Lemezzina 68).

South Melbourne: Petkovic, Orlic, Kuzmanovic, Polak, Panopoulos (Petersen 76), Coveny, Iosifidis, Clarkson, Kelic, Goutzioulis (Alsopp 64), De Amicis.

Scorer: Cosmos Dee (21).

Yellow cards: Cosmos: Moreno (45), Baxter (52), Armstrong (87). Lakers: Coveny (5), Kelic (43).

Referee: S Micallef.

Crowd: 1,600.

POY: 3-Dee (CC), 2-Coveny (SM), 1-Giannasca (CC).



Paul Dee: The winning goal and first class performance



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ERICSSON CUP

MATCH REPORTS

TWO MICHAELS PLAY SANTA

ADELAIDE CITY

4 BY LANCE LIBRANDI

GIPPSLAND FALCONS 1

The pre-Christmas clash at Hindmarsh Stadium delivered three points down the chimney to Adelaide City, propelling them into third place on the Ericsson Cup ladder.

The game started on a cool, evening in Adelaide and both teams were evenly matched early on. Neither team appeared in any hurry to force the pace, when in the 12th minute, the Falcons stunned the home crowd with the opening goal. A fine run through by Mark Foy saw him sweep on the ball, rush into the penalty area and fire a powerful drive past Jason

Petkovic into the top of the goal.

The early set back did not have the immediate effect on the Zebras that their fans would have liked, although Brad Hassell had a good chance in the 16th when his strike from long distance flashed over the crossbar. Midway through the first half, City had a claim for a penalty for handball turned down by the referee.

Four minutes from half-time, the Zebras had another great opportunity when a good through ball by Brooks found his strike partner Michael Musitano on the left side of

the box. His hard, low drive was blocked by Gippsland custodian Jim Kourtis and the rebound fell back to Brooks on the follow up. Brooks' shot from a tight angle was slightly deflected into the side netting with an open goal beckoning.

While unsure what John Nyskohus had to say to his team in the break, though it must have been inspiring, what was to follow was amazing. The first ten minutes of the second half became the "Michael & Michael Show", as Musitano and Brooks ran riot to score three quick goals and batter Gippsland into submission. The first came

after 60 seconds, when Musitano finally opened his account, hitting a seemingly average cross by Yates first time past Kourtis. One can only guess the feeling of relief for the ex-Canberra striker who has struggled with fitness and injuries all season.

Four minutes later it was Brooks' turn, when a series of passes between Musitano and himself led to a run past two defenders into the penalty area, where he slotted the ball past Kourtis to double the lead. Two minutes after that goal, Brooks could have doubled his own tally from a through pass from Hassell, but

passed instead of shooting, and the chance was lost.

In the 53rd minute, a monumental error by the Gippsland defence, when all the back line stopped expecting offside, and Brad Armour raced through them towards goal. He drew Kourtis out and squared the ball to Angie Costanzo who miskicked from close range. Musitano latched onto the loose ball and found the net from two metres out, effectively applying the knockout punch with most of the second half remaining. Will Hastie tried a long-range

Adelaide City: Petkovic, Armour, Yates, Ivanovic, Tobin, Costanzo, Hassell, Gibson, Musitano (Dodd 74), Brooks, Brazzale (Salapadidis 66).

Gippsland Falcons: Kourtis, Marina, Stergiopoulos, Manogs (Gotis 49), Palamiras, Foy, Krncevic, Duric (Gimenez 81), E Masi (M Masi 55), Bell, Hastie.

Scorers: Zebras: Musitano (46, 53), Brooks (50, 69). Falcons: Foy (12).

Yellow Cards: Zebras: Gibson (39), Dodd (90).

Crowds: 3,780
Referee: W Dade
POY: 3 - Brooks (AC); 2 - Musitano (AC); 1 - Tobin (AC).

strike which sailed over the bar in the 57th minute.

In the 69th Brooks put the result beyond doubt with

another penetrating run, a great one-two with Musitano, and his shot accurately beating Kourtis again.

KNIGHTS BACK ON WINNING TRAIL

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 4

BY DWYGH TUFFNELL

WEST ADELAIDE 0

Melbourne Knights ended their goal drought with an emphatic 4-0 win over West Adelaide. Two goals from Lee Kutlesovski and one each from Joe Simunic and Tom Pondeljak contributed to a victory which coach Ian Dobson believes may signal a turnaround for the club.

"We go to Perth this week full of confidence after this victory and we then have two games against Canberra so maybe we can get a run going."

Kutlesovski started the scoring early with a spectacular turning volley after Andrew Marth had flicked on Zoran Markovski's long throw. Pondeljak was played up front to partner Kutlesovski and the move worked well as the two threatened to score on a number of occasions. Simunic added a second for the Knights in first half stoppage time. Ante Kovacevic swung over a cross to Marth but Hamilton Thorp intervened with his hand and cleared the ball away.

After consulting assistant referee, Andrew Stacey, Mark Shield pointed to the penalty spot. Nathan Wildy guessed the right way but could only parry the ball back to Simunic who calmly slotted the rebound away.

Pondeljak was doing everything but scoring, including having a shot that hit an upright, but he finally found the target in the 79th minute. Kutlesovski linked well with Simunic, who by now had swapped positions with Marth, before crossing for the unmarked Pondeljak to head home.

Into stoppage time, Kutlesovski capped off the win after he was on the end of a Lubo Lapsansky through ball, rounded Wildy and knocked the ball in.

"It was a well deserved win and it could have been bigger" said a satisfied Dobson. "They were down in confidence and that wasn't the West Adelaide I expected, but I'm not complaining, we needed the three points."

"The positive sign is that we have an injury free squad. We've got players coming back from injury and the competition for places there!"

Despite the big win, plus the return of Adrian Cervinski and John Markovski to the youth team, Dobson says the Knights are still on the lookout for another striker. "It will maintain the competition for places, we're still looking overseas but not having much luck, however, bringing in Joe Caleta to the squad will be a benefit for us."

Melbourne Knights: Didulica, D Cervinski, Z Markovski, Marth, Simunic (Trupkovic 85), Lapsansky, Kutlesovski, T Pondeljak, Kovacevic, Duzel (Biskic 70), Banini (Caleta 32).

West Adelaide Sharks: Wildy, Thorp, Slager, Hooker, Castro, Aloisi (Kokkinoplitis 79), Cardozo (Cutillo 46), Day, Tibaldi, Tsekini, Arnone (Alagich 56).

Scorers: Knights: Kutlesovski (7, 90) Simunic (44) T Pondeljak (79).

Yellow Cards: Knights: Caleta (50), Lapsansky (61), Z Markovski (82). Sharks: Slager (39), Tibaldi (44).

Referee: M Shield.
Crowd: 3,970
POY: 3-Simunic (MK) 2-T Pondeljak (MK), 1-Kovacevic (MK).



Tom Pondeljak struck Knights' fourth goal which finished off the Sharks



MARCONI v PERTH GLORY

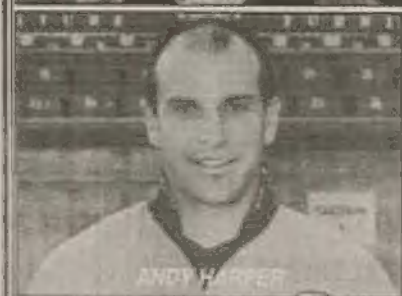


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ERICSSON CUP

MATCH REPORTS

WARRIORS POOR HOME FORM

Collingwood Warriors 0

By DWYGH TUFFNELL

UTS Olympic 0

Collingwood Warriors' poor home form continues as UTS Olympic gained a point in a drab scoreless draw in a deferred round 3 game. The Melbourne team's recent home record has become a problem as they have not won there since the first round. Attendances have dropped off at such a rate at Victoria Park, that most estimates of the December

23 crowd had it at not much more than a thousand.

Both sides had played only two days before, and it showed. They were also both coming off big defeats and looked like they would settle for a point.

Collingwood brought in its newly acquired defender from Sydney United, Joe Vrkic, for his first start to cover the suspensions of both Rick Cerracchio and Alex

Pryhodko. Vrkic played well but he and the other Warrior defenders weren't tested all that regularly.

Andy Vlahos came close to scoring for the Warriors with two efforts in two minutes in the first half. He was picked out by a Goran Lozanovski through ball in the 25th minute but Olympic defender David Barrett made a crucial interception just as Vlahos was about to shoot. Shortly

after Vlahos had an overhead kick that went just wide of Tony Franken's goal.

Olympic's exciting Young Soccerer, Brett Emerton, came closest of anyone to scoring in the 57th minute. A terrific solo run, starting with a magnificent turn which took out both Vrkic and Leigh Tsoumerkas, ended with Emerton crashing a shot against the bar with Frank Juric well beaten.

"I have to learn how to deal with this situation" said Warriors coach Zoran Matic afterwards. "I've been in a similar situation with Adelaide City before, but at least there, there were signs of encouragement."

☆☆☆

WARRIORS: Juric, Pak, Scott, Vrkic, Tsoumerkas (Jolevski 61), Talladira, Lozanovski, Silic, Vlahos (Di Iorio 46), Taliadoros, MacNicol.

OLYMPIC: Franken, Barrett, Ciantar, Baillie, Tsekenis, Tome (Augerinos 46), Edwards, Emerton, Trajanovski, Angelovski, Blagojevic.

YELLOW CARDS: Olympic - Angelovski (19), Augerinos (56).

REFEREE: E Brazzale

CROWD: 1000

VOTES: 3-Blagojevic (UO), 2-Emerton (UO) 1-Vrkic (CW).

FALCONS FRUSTRATE STRIKERS EFFORTS

Gippsland Falcons 1

Gippsland Falcons scored an upset 1-0 win over second placed Brisbane Strikers, at home on Saturday night. This was their first home win of the season.

In an entertaining, though heavily contested game, diminutive Hugo Gimenez gave the home side the lead in the 68th minute when he

chested a long Alex Djuric cross from the left wing over Brisbane goalkeeper Graham Ross.

A delighted Gippsland coach Frank Arok said after the game that "we have proven that we can out play even the top teams. We managed to put it together and I am happy with the result."

Arok's opposite Frank

Farina, however, thought his team created some good opportunities.

"It was a dopey sort of a goal to lose to," Farina said. "We could have equalised but the Gippsland goalkeeper Jim Kourtis was too good."

Both teams were cautious at the start, but Gippsland Falcons gradually gained a clear edge. The first real

chance at goal came in the 18th minute when the brilliant Djuric beat several opponents, but his decisive shot rebounded off the legs of Ross.

In the 28th minute Brisbane lost Farina, who had to leave the pitch due to a nagging hamstring injury. After Farina's departure the Strikers had no answer to the Falcons

tight man-on-man marking and decisive tackling and were unable to play the open game that they are noted for.

The only real shot at goal for Brisbane in the first half was a long range effort in the 41st minute by Rod Brown.

In the second stanza the overall pace of the game picked up with the Gippslanders again having the

Brisbane Strikers 0

edge.

Four minutes into the half Manny Gotis, from a set move, missed the uprights by centimetres. Then 30secs later Djuric, from an acute angle on the left forced Ross to save.

In a spectacular individual move in the 56th minute Marcus Stergiopolous broke through the Brisbane defence and only had Ross to beat but

pushed his shot wide.

The Strikers responded to the Falcons' goal with substitute Chris Salter twice pounding shots at goal, but Kourtis saved the day for the Falcons on both occasions.

MATCH STATISTICS
NOT AVAILABLE AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.
POY 3 - Djuric (GF) 2 - Kourtis (GF) 1 - Ross (BS)

WARRIORS GET JUST DESSERTS

Collingwood Warriors 1

By DWYGH TUFFNELL

Wollongong City 1

Collingwood Warriors' winless run continued at Victoria Park on Sunday when they were held to a 1-1 draw by Wollongong City. Their home ground record is becoming increasingly worrying as they have scored just five goals and won only once. The latest visitors, Wollongong, were good value for a point and perhaps could have snatched all three with the quality of chances they had.

Collingwood's ordinary form must change quickly as they have two games in two weeks against South Melbourne. Their unsettled, ever changing lineup has been torn apart in recent weeks by quality sides and at this stage and with this form, they will not take part in the finals.

They were exposed as early as the 8th minute, although the manner in which the goal occurred, would have unlocked even the tightest of defences.

Sonny Sevin's cross picked out Scott Chipperfield, who with a flick from the outside of his boot, delivered an inch perfect pass for Nick Joseski to knock the ball in.

Emie Tapai had gone close as the Warriors struggled to get back after an early shock, but it took a freak goal to haul them level. Tapai held onto the ball for a long time searching for the perfect pass, rolled it across to Rick Cerracchio who from 25 metres let fly with a screamer that Wolves' keeper Adam Brodbeck didn't attempt to save.

It was thanks to Brodbeck, though, that Wollongong were still level at half time. Kimon Taliadoros floated a cross to Tapai who was unmarked but had his low header stopped by the young 'keeper.

Collingwood survived a

couple of anxious moments early in the second period when both Chipperfield and then Joseski were denied by some frantic defending.

Brodbeck was called into action again shortly after this time to stop Taliadoros from

scoring his fifth goal of the season. Goran Lozanovski proved to be a big danger to the Wolves defence late in the game and paved the way for a Tapai chance that went begging. The Warriors were forced to throw reserve goalkeeper Dean Anastasiadis into the action in the 74th minute. Goalscorer Cerracchio had developed cramp and with both other substitutes already on the park, Anastasiadis went on for his first appearance of the year.

Zoran Matic says the fitness of the players is the major obstacle in getting the team back on track. "They are not fit. They only arrived seven days before the season started, there's nothing I can do. We could have won it today on the chances we had

Warriors: Juric, Pryhodko (Jolevski 46), Scott, Cerracchio (Anastasiadis 74), Vrkic, Taliadoros, Taliadoros, Tapai, Lozanovski, MacNicol, Silic (Di Iorio 72).

Wolves: Brodbeck, Ceccoli, Van Egmond, Horsley, Sevin, Reda (Dimoski 53), Harlock (Karamis 59), Joseski, Lloyd, Surjan (Bourke 83), Chipperfield.

SCORERS: Collingwood-Cerracchio (30), Wollongong-Joseski (8).

Yellow Cards: Wolves: Ceccoli (16).

Referee: G Connolly.

Crowd: 2,987

POY: 3-Ceccoli (WC).

2-Taliadoros (CW), 1-Horsley (WC).

but that means nothing. If you blow the chances you've got to create more chances."

Matic gave the old cliché of 'one week at a time' rather than worrying about making the finals.

"In sport we all get what

we deserve you can't call yourself lucky or unlucky, we've now got two tough games before the break where we can try to get our fitness up to the level we want it."



Sonny Sevin: From his cross the Wolves scored their goal.

PERTH CLINCH A THRILLER

Perth Glory 3

By RICHARD KREIDER

Melbourne Knights 1

Perth Glory stormed back into the Ericsson Cup top six last Saturday following an emotion charged, last gasp 3-2 win over defending champions Melbourne Knights at Perth Oval.

It was the stuff fairy-tales are made of, a near capacity crowd of 14759, the largest Ericsson Cup gate so far this season, (and arguably the most vocal), was one that had visiting Soccer Australia chairman David Hill enthralled. The soccer Supremo first watched how a Glory side tore apart their highly fancied opponents in the opening-half, came perilously close to throwing it all away after the break, and then scored an unlikely winner in the dying seconds when down to ten men.

"What a climax" said a jubilant Glory coach Gary Marocchi.

"I actually thought we were going to lose this when Dale went off. We just can't afford to let the opposition off the book like that"

Glory started in typical explosive fashion and enjoyed most of the opening exchanges, by employing the blistering pace of flank runners Scot Miller and Dale Wingell, who continually fed their strikeforce combination of Bobby Despotovski, Vas Kalogeracos and Paul Strudwick.

But it was hard working midfielder Paul McVittie who eventually broke the deadlock in the 34th minute, when he nodded home a Craig Naven corner in almost slow motion, at the near post.

Six minutes later, Glory increased their advantage when Kalogeracos started a solo run from the right-hand touchline and finished it with an unstoppable left-foot strike near the edge of the box that goalkeeper Joey Didulica

The Knights were a different team coming out of the break, displaying a tenacious yet controlled style of attacking football that paid off just eight minutes from the restart when substitute Adrian

Cervinski capitalised on a sudden lapse in concentration by the Glory rear-guard. Cervinski then placed his side on level terms after an hours play with yet another opportunist goal that pleased Didulica enough for him to run the full length of the pitch to join in the celebrations.

Things then went from bad to worse for the Perth side in the 77th minute, when Wingell collected a second yellow card from Referee Andy Gorton for allegedly

tripping Melbourne midfielder Ivan Duzel.

But as hard as they tried, especially Andrew Marth, Joe Simunic and David Cervinski, the Knights were unable to break through again, thanks to some stubborn and at times desperate resistance from former Knights star Vinko Buljubasic, Craig Naven, Gavin Wilkinson and Vince Matassa.

After two streakers failed in their attempts to spoil the afternoon nine minutes from time, and with a drawn result looming, Perth defender Gavin Wilkinson burst his way into the Knights goal area for one last sortie, a minute into stoppage time.

The Kiwi international then pushed the ball back to Miller lurking on the edge of the area, who swiftly yet

accurately chipped the ball over Didulica for the winning goal. And with scenes similar to when Glory performed an identical winning act against Adelaide City in Round eight, a small number of crazed spectators invaded the pitch to congratulate their new heroes.

But unlike last time, security guards were on hand to diffuse any likelihood of a frenzied riot.

And when the final whistle blew, a number of Knights players slumped to the ground in despair, knowing that they have become the latest victims to experience the extraordinarily intimidating atmosphere generated by thousands of ecstatic WA soccer fans that are currently intriguing the nation's sporting media.

Perth Glory: Matassa, C Naven, Wilkinson, Buljubasic, G Naven, Miller, McVittie, Strudwick, Despotovski, Kalogeracos (Bertovic 79), Wingell.

Melbourne Knights: Didulica, Cervinski, Markovski, Marth, Simunic, Lapasansky (Cervinski 45), Kutlesovsky, Pondeljak, Kovacevic, Caleta (Vojtek 34), Duzel (Biskic 78).

Scorers: Glory: McVittie (34), Kalogeracos (40), Miller (90); Knights: A Cervinski (53,60).

Yellow Cards: Glory: Wingell (57); Knights: Markovski (21), Simanic (83).

Red Cards: Glory: Wingell (77).

Crowd: 14,759.

POY: 3-Miller (PG), 2-Wilkinson (PG), 1-Cervinski (MK).



ERICSSON CUP

MATCH REPORTS

NEWCASTLE FRIGHTEN OLYMPIC

UTS OLYMPIC

2

By JOHN ECONOMOS

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS

2

Newcastle Topper Breakers, despite being a man down for most of the second session, gallantly recoiled to earn a very well deserved 2-2 draw against a disjointed UTS Olympic last Sunday night at Belmore Oval.

Greatly inspired by their midfield trio of, highly talented Troy Halpin, a new trim and powerfully fully fit Robbie Ironside, the tenacious Scotty Thomas, plus the excellent covering of sweeper Shane Pryce, the Novocastrians in fact could have won this battle. Well into stoppage time Ironside went millimetres wide of the base of the left post with a desperate right-footed 12 metre drive in the dying seconds of the match.

Newcastle's striker Harry James was sent off by referee Con Diomis 11 minutes into the second half for a second bookable offence for a foul on Olympic's goalkeeper Anthony Franken. James just six minutes prior had first been booked for dissent. But despite the sending off, the disadvantaged Newcastle defiantly dug in and in fact opened the scoreline in the 64th through a Nick Meredith

own-goal.

Central marker Andy Roberts strongly raided up the left flank, cut back a hot flat ball into the box which Meredith failed to control and ultimately deflected into his own net.

But just a minute later Olympic equalised through right defender Davie Barrett following a corner from the right taken by linkman Norman Tome. A somewhat shaky goalkeeper, Liam Baker pushed the cross out, but only as far as to the lurking Barrett who fired a bullet header back into the target.

At the 67th mark, ace international striker Kris Trajanovski lifted Olympic into the lead. Chesting down

midfielder Milan Blagojevic's delicate chip over the top, 'Traja' side footed into the target under Baker's diving body.

But Newcastle was not finished. Far from it.

Showing much steel like character reminiscent of their current coach and former World Cup skipper John Kosmina in his playing days, the well organised visitors tore into Olympic with unyielding fury.

In the dying seconds of normal time and following a well flighted 35 metre Halpin free kick, the giant hurtling frame of Ironside was seen climbing high on the back post to power a header into the target for the equaliser.

Action aplenty erupted in

the first session which saw Halpin shave the base of Olympic's left post in the 2nd minute, Ironside head a minute later just past the upright, Trajanovski blast past the post in the 7th and two minutes later the same player shot strongly on target but the Newcastle custodian Baker make a magnificent save down low. Meredith with a minute left before the break fired a cracking 35 metre left footer that left the left post rocking.

Kosmina obviously most disappointed at being denied maximum points for the second time within a week, reflected, "We did more than enough to win it as we had heaps of possession in the first session and defended very well in the second half in an overall good battle. Despite being a man down, I still felt that we could sneak it in the end. Stupidity got Harry James sent off and you could see that Troy Halpin is now more than ready to step up into the national squad."

Two minutes after the break Newcastle's top marksman Jason Bennett and Olympic's reliable lateral defender Adam Ciantar both had to leave the pitch

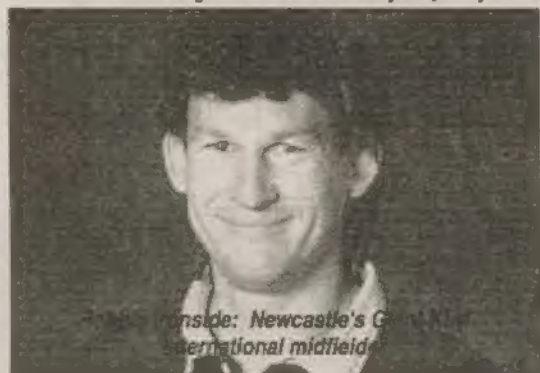
UTS Olympic:
Franken: Barrett,
Meredith: Baillie,
Ciantar, Angelovski
(Angerinos 78): Tome,
Blagojevic, Tsekenis:
Trajanovski,
Edwards (Gonzalez 89)).
Newcastle Topper Breakers: Baker,
Richie, McManus,
Roberts, Pryce,
Sprod: Thomas, Ironside,
Halpin: Bennett (McQuire 81), James.

Scorers: Olympic:
Barrett (65), Trajanovski
(67). Topper Breakers:
Own Goal (64), Ironside
(89).

Yellow Cards:
Olympic: Tsekenis (15).
Topper Breakers: Thomas
(32), James (50, 56),
McManus (61).

Red Card: Topper
Breakers: James (56).
Referee: C. Diomis.
Crowd: 5,128.
P.O.Y.: 3-Halpin (NB),
2-Ironside (NB), 1-Baillie
(UO).

following a clash of heads. Both bravely returned minutes later with their head wounds heavily bandaged.



Inside: Newcastle's G
international midfielder

MARK READ'S GUIDE TO SOCCER BETTING (PT. 4)

'CORRECT SCORE', 'HALF TIME/FULL TIME' & 'FIRST GOALSCORER BETTING'

If you want to have a bet in a match but are not excited by the relatively short prices on offer for your selected team to win the game in 90 minutes, you can boost your return by backing your judgement more exactly. For example, on Boxing Day Manchester Utd were 4/5 to beat Nottingham Forest at the City Ground. With Nottingham Forest languishing at the foot of the Premier League you may have expected Manchester Utd to win comfortably but were not tempted to lay out a \$500 to win \$400. As an alternative you could have backed the Red Devils to beat Forest 4-0 at the much more attractive odds of 33/1. In this case you would have won the \$400 by betting \$12 at 33/1 instead of risking \$500 on United to win the game at 4/5, and naturally, you're not limited to one correct score bet per match - you could back a small range of scores and still come up with a hefty return to your smaller outlay.

Nottingham Forest v Manchester Utd									
1-0	8/1	0-0	8/1	0-1	6/1	H-H	11/2		
2-0	18/1	1-1	11/2	0-2	7/1	H-D	14/1		
2-1	12/1	2-2	14/1	1-2	7/1	H-A	25/1		
3-0	40/1	3-3	50/1	0-3	12/1	D-H	7/1		
3-1	33/1			1-3	12/1	D-D	4/1		
3-2	40/1			2-3	25/1	D-A	7/2		
4-0	100/1			0-4	33/1	A-H	28/1		
4-1	100/1			1-4	33/1	A-D	16/1		
4-2	100/1			2-4	50/1	A-A	15/8		

Another way to enhance your return in a match is to bet on how the game will stand at half time and at 90 minutes. If you think the game could swing after half time from the home team leading to the away team finally coming out on top you would get at least 25/1. Alternatively you may believe Manchester Utd (in the example above) could score in the first half and hold on to win at full time. Instead of making \$400 profit from your \$500 win bet on the favourites you could more than double your profit by backing them to lead after 45 and 90 minutes at 15/8 (away team/away team) giving you an improved total return of \$1,437.50.

Our final bet type for this week is one of the most popular bets placed on football in Britain. The 'First Goalscorer' bet. This is the perfect bet to have if you intend to watch a match live. Every time your chosen player gets anywhere near the opposition goal the excitement starts as you will him to have a shot. If you chose to back a player who takes penalties (Eric Cantona for instance) you're also looking for every opportunity of a foul in the area. Because you effectively have 22 runners in the field the prices can be very rewarding, especially if you chose one of the less popular players. Don't restrict yourself to the Alan Shearers and Robbie Fowlers of the game, a tentative bet on the tall centre back who comes up for corners can often pay huge dividends. Tony Adams often scores for Arsenal in just those situations, whereas in the Nottingham Forest game young Manchester United star David Beckham scored in the 22nd minute and was a 14/1 chance.

The main thing to remember when thinking of having a bet on a game of soccer is that you are not restricted to the choice of home win, away win or draw. A bet can be tailored to suit every punters situation and pocket - whether you want a 5 figure wager on a good thing, or \$20 on Paul Gascoigne to score first for Rangers so that you have an interest in the game that they're showing live on TV, Darwin All Sports can cater for you.

If you're serious about soccer, there's only one place to call - Darwin All Sports.

Mark Read's Darwin All Sports

Sports betting on all major Aust. & International Sport

THIS WEEK'S ERICSSON CUP ACTION

Home Win	Draw	Away Win
4/5 Wollongong	9/4	Gippsland 3/1
5/4 Brisbane	9/4	Sydney Utd 7/4
EV Marconi	9/4	Perth 2/1
4/6 Adelaide City	5/2	Newcastle 7/2
5/4 South Melb	9/4	Collingwood 7/4
4/7 Melb Knights	5/2	Canberra 9/2
EV UTS Olympic	9/4	West Adelaide 2/1

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Elite Sportspeople for Australia

Dear Sir,
The debate on Joe Simunic's decision to place his allegiance with Croatia has raged now for couple of weeks without one aspect being raised. That being that the idea of an Australian Institute of Sport was born out of this country's sportsmen and women's inability to win a gold medal at the 1976 Montreal Olympics. The government of the day decided to plough millions of Australian taxpayer's money into getting Australian sport back to the highest level by producing elite sportsmen and women. Twenty years down the track, people can only agree that in most sports this goal has been achieved.

Now we have a situation where not only Joe Simunic, but a number of cricketers who have passed through the Australian Cricket Academy in Adelaide, have exploited the system and decided they wish to represent other countries. Like Simunic, these cricketers would argue they have made their decisions for financial reasons, and nobody

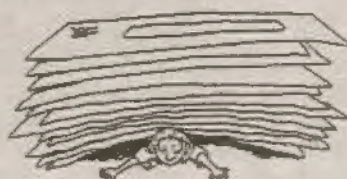
can debate a persons wish for providing a better life for themselves. What should be done, is protect the ideal of the AIS, to produce "Elite Australian Sportspeople."

I believe a document should be signed prior to anybody beginning an AIS scholarship stating that in the advent of that person electing to represent any country other than Australia, they then repay every cent that Australian taxpayers have invested in their scholarship. Regardless of whether that person is of Croatian descent, English descent, Chinese descent, wherever descent, if the financial benefits are so good for the individual elsewhere it is only fair that they repay Australia - some sportsmen and women who have passed through the AIS will repay Australia with gold medals, some with world championships, others with world records. Joe Simunic, for mine, can repay in cash - the thing that apparently motivates him.

Michael Wagstaff,
ADAMSTOWN, NSW.

Letters to the Editor

Have your say on any soccer issue in the world. Preference will be given to short letters. Include daytime phone number for verification.



The Editor,
AUSTRALIAN &
BRITISH SOCCER
WEEKLY
PO BOX 155,
MARRICKVILLE
NSW 2204
Fax: (02) 9550-9332

Short letters of about 400 words will be given preference in this column.

The opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect those of this newspaper

Later rather than sooner

Dear Sir,
It's interesting to see that Sepp Blatter the general secretary of FIFA, likes to have fun and games with the Aussie media and Australian Soccer Officials as well, by suggesting that we try to host the 2006 World Cup here in Australia. He knows full well we haven't got a chance in hell to host the Cup in the year 2006.

There are two or three very good reasons among others why there's no chance for that year. First is that it's being held in the Asian area in 2002 of which Oceania is unofficially a part of. Second the host country will be picked 6 years in advance, which will be a few months before the Sydney Olympics, therefore there is no chance of finding out how the soccer tournament has been run at the Sydney Olympics, unless the host city is picked after the games in Sydney. Thirdly there's another 9 or 10 countries in line for hosting the finals. Because you don't have to build an Olympic

style village and other stadiums for just one sport and around 1000 players and officials involved who are spread around the country, dozens of countries are capable of hosting the finals, which makes it very difficult for Australia in the short term. I would say that if the Soccer section of the Olympics is run properly and handled professionally and supported well around the country in the year 2000, there is no reason to see why we can't host the finals in 2010 or 2014 or most definitely by the year 2030 or before, which is within the lifetime of most people under the age of 40. So there you have it Sepp, one Jeff Kennett is enough for the public here in Australia, and we don't need another one who impersonates him with lofty ideals and hot air statements.

Dominic Scullion,
HELENSVALE, QLD.

Upside in Canberra decision

Dear Sir,
While I do not retract from my claim that Canberra is totally unworthy of being awarded Olympic Football because of a distinct lack of interest in soccer, there is still some upside to this bad decision.

Part of the unwritten deal to give Canberra the group I assume must include a rescue package that will keep the hapless Cosmos afloat until after the year 2000. If the Cosmos were to fold anytime before the Olympics it would be most unfortunate to say the least.

While all attempts to establish a National League soccer club in Canberra on a permanent basis have ultimately failed because of a

lack of support they all have achieved success in one area that being as a nursery for a surprising number of talented local players. While it is very hard to be optimistic about the Cosmos long term survival if they are given a measure of financial security for the next four years then at the very least they will continue to offer a stage in the A League for the stream of talented young players that reside in the A.C.T. most of whom otherwise would be lost to the game.

No prizes for guessing who the likely underwriter of the Cosmos survival is and why they are the unlikely benefactor.

R. Melior,
Bondi, NSW.



ERICSSON CUP MATCH REPORT

WEST ADELAIDE BACK ON TRACK

West Adelaide 2

BY PETER KRUPKA

A late strike by substitute Jamie Perin ended West Adelaide's horror Ericsson Cup run, helping it to a 2-1 win over championship contender Marconi at the Hindmarsh Stadium on Sunday night.

A lifelong devotee and player for West's archrivals Adelaide City, Perin volleyed home the winner in the 82nd minute to celebrate his finest moment with the club he moved to after leaving the

Zebras during the off-season. Perin capitalised on Marconi's inability to clear properly from a corner with his left foot volley taking a deflection which left Marconi 'keeper Bobby Catlin stranded.

A 25 metre shot by Brad Maloney had evened the scores in the 65th minute after Hamilton Thorpe in the 42nd minute put West in front. Without a goal in its last five games and winless in its last six, the Sharks celebrated when Thorpe headed home a perfect cross from Nathan

Day. Thorpe, a regular defender with the Sharks, was moved into the frontline by coach Adrian Santrac to partner Jimmy Tsekis in the desperate bid to end the side's agonising goal drought. His height bothered Marconi, which was out of sorts all night after three successive wins.

However it appeared West's luck had again deserted the side when Maloney, free outside the penalty area at a corner kick, pushed a seemingly innocuous

shot through the West defence which caught West 'keeper Michael Harkness out of position.

West could have won by more had striker Tsekis capitalised on a seventh minute chance manufactured by Corey Artone who threaded a pass through the Marconi defence. But Tsekis stubbed his foot on the ground while taking the shot allowing Catlin to make an easy save.

Ten minutes later Thorpe laid off a similar pass for Tsekis but this time his shot

with the outside of the right foot sailed harmlessly wide of the post.

While West had the early ascendancy, Vlado Zoric was causing trouble for the home side down the left flank. A cross deep into the West penalty area in the 38th minute fell kindly to Maloney but, startled by his fortune, he failed to beat Harkness from inside the box.

Marconi looked to have stolen the lead 10 minutes before fulltime when a low corner ripped through the

Marconi Fairfield 1

West defence and was pushed over the line by Sean Babic but referee Eddie Lennie ruled Harkness was fouled in the process.

West Adelaide: Harkness, Thorpe, Hooker, Slager, Aloisi, Castro, Kokkinopoulis, Tibaldi (Perin 78), Day (Cardozo 73), Artone, Tsekis.

Marconi: Catlin, Stanton, Bingley, Casserty, Harper, Foster, Maloney, Longo, Babic, Awaritefe (Robertson 70), Zoric.

Scorers: Sharks: Thorpe (42), Perin (82). Marconi: Maloney (67).

☆☆☆

Yellow Cards: Sharks: Day (37), Tibaldi (40). Cardozo (75). Marconi: Zoric (6). Awaritefe (52).

☆☆☆

Referee: E. Lennie
Crowd: 4,079
FOY: 1-Hooker (WA), 2-Zoric (MF), 1-Thorp (WA).

AROUND THE CLUBS

Thin Glory Squad May Be Boosted

A surprise guest fronted Aps for training at Perth Oval last Friday, it was none other than former Kiwi international Wynton Rufer who is preparing for his next season in Japan's J-League with JEF United.

It is well known he has an affection for Perth, since his wife hails from WA, and now the striker has given Glory coach Gary Marocchi every indication that he is willing to stay on for the second half of the Ericsson Cup season, if the price is right.

Rufer is fully aware of the

soccer talent in the West. His former Bundesliga club Werder Bremen paid a lightning visit in June 1992 and lost 3-2 to the WA state side at the WACA, just days after winning the European Cup Winners Cup.

HILL MEETS THE 'HILLS ANGELS'

Soccer Australia chairman David Hill made his first visit to the Hill section of Perth Oval on Saturday and left in raptures despite the odd baptism of beer. He was so impressed by the European style support, he has promised

to let his new national coach Terry Venables experience it for himself when he arrives in Australia for the forthcoming four-nations tournament.

In fact, it is believed the former England manager will get to see the high-flying Glory boys this Saturday, when they take on Marconi Fairfield at Bossley Park.

This is no doubt exceptional news for players such as striker Bobby Despotovski, who like his team-mates were overlooked for the recently selected Socceroo squad.

Meanwhile, Glory

connections can only feel pleased with what has transpired in their inaugural Ericsson Cup season. They have seen a healthy average 9,800 go through the turnstiles for their six home games, and it doesn't appear to be waning.

In fact, the Perth officials should start looking more

seriously at the snow-balling wave of support that may soon become too large for Perth Oval to handle.

No doubt the local governing officials are quietly fuming that the West missed out to places like Canberra for one of the soccer Groups in the 2000 Olympics.



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and Under 18's

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DATE: 19 JAN 1997

TIME: 10.00AM
PLACE: ABRUZZI OVAL, 11 ELIZABETH ST,
WETHERILL PARK

ENQUIRIES CONTACT: FRANK
(WK) 9267 1611
(MOB) 0411 381 969
(HM) 9743 4658

PLAYERS REQUIRED FOR
Under 16's YOUTH LEAGUE
DIVISION 1

CONTACT: TERRI FORBES
(HM) 9725 7400
(WK) 9742 7000

ERICSSON CUP

RESULTS & SCORERS

ROUND TWELVE

Canberra Cosmos
(Dee 20)
South Melbourne
Crowd: 2,327

1



Gippsland Falcons
(Gimenez 68)
Brisbane Strikers
Crowd: 2,581

1



Perth Glory
(McVittie 34, Kalogeracos 40, Miller 90)
Melbourne Knights
(Cervinski 53, 60)
Crowd: 14,757

3

2

Collingwood Warriors
(Cerrachio 30)
Wollongong City
(Joselski 8)
Crowd: 2,987

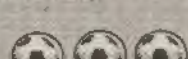
1



UTS Olympic
(Barrett 60, Trajanovski 63)
Newcastle Breakers
(og Meredith 60, Ironside 84)
Crowd: 5,128

2

2



Sydney United
(og Armour 74)
Adelaide City
(Hassell 41)
Crowd: 5,195

1

1

West Adelaide
(Thorp 42, Perin 82)
Marconi Fairfield
(Maloney 67)
Crowd: 4,079

2

1



ATTENDANCE FIGURES FOR ROUND 12

1995/96 - 31,073
1996/97 - 37,054

NEXT WEEK'S FIXTURES

PRICES SUPPLIED BY **SPORTODDS**

WOLLONGONG CITY V GIPPSLAND FALCONS

FRIDAY 3 JANUARY 1997 - 7.30PM

Wollongong City 4/5, Draw 5/2, Gippsland 5/2

BRISBANE STRIKERS V SYDNEY UNITED

SATURDAY 4 JANUARY 1997 - 7.00PM

Brisbane Strikers 5/4, Draw 2/1, Sydney United 7/4

MARCONI FAIRFIELD V PERTH GLORY

SATURDAY 4 JANUARY 1997 - 7.00PM

Marconi Fairfield 5/4, Draw 2/1, Perth Glory 7/4

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS V CANBERRA COSMOS

SUNDAY 5 JANUARY 1997 - 6.00PM

Melbourne Knights 7/2, Draw 5/2, Canberra Cosmos 5/1

SOUTH MELBOURNE V COLLINGWOOD WARRIORS

SUNDAY 5 JANUARY 1997 - 6.30PM

South Melbourne 4/5, Draw 9/4, Collingwood Warriors 3/1

UTS OLYMPIC V WEST ADELAIDE

SUNDAY 5 JANUARY 1997 - 6.30PM

UTS Olympic 4/7, Draw 5/2, West Adelaide 4/1

ADELAIDE CITY V NEWCASTLE BREAKERS

SUNDAY 5 JANUARY 1997 7.30PM

Adelaide City 7/2, Draw 9/4, Newcastle Breakers 5/1

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SportOdds

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Bobby Despotovski: 9 goals for Perth Glory

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sydney United	12	9	2	1	35	16	29
Brisbane Strikers	12	8	2	2	27	14	26
Perth Glory	12	6	1	5	28	21	19
Adelaide City	12	5	4	3	14	9	19
South Melbourne	12	5	3	4	14	11	18
Wollongong City	12	4	6	2	16	14	18
Marconi Fairfield	12	5	2	5	19	18	17
UTS Olympic	12	4	4	4	17	20	16
Gippsland Falcons	12	3	4	5	12	18	13
West Adelaide	12	4	1	7	14	24	12
Melbourne Knights	12	3	3	6	13	15	12
Newcastle Breakers	13	2	6	5	20	24	12
Collingwood Warriors	12	2	6	4	13	22	11
Canberra Cosmos	13	1	4	8	12	28	7

NAME TEAM GOALS

David Zdrilic	Sydney United	12
Bobby Despotovski	Perth Glory	9
Ante Milicic	Sydney United	7
Rodney Brown	Brisbane Strikers	6
Frank Farina	Brisbane Strikers	6
Paul Strudwick	Perth Glory	6
Norman Tome	UTS Olympic	6
Jason Bennet	Newcastle Breakers	5
Matthew Horne	Wollongong City	5
Kris Trajanovski	UTS Olympic	5
Sean Babic	Marconi Fairfield	4
Vasili Kalogeracos	Perth Glory	4
Norman Kelly	Canberra Cosmos	4
Eddie Krncevic	Gippsland Falcons	4
Ice Kukulovski	Melbourne Knights	4
Brad Maloney	Marconi Fairfield	4
Dino Muminovic	Adelaide City	4
Nick O'Neil	South Melbourne	4
Kimoni Taliadoros	Collingwood Warriors	4
Jimmy Tsekini	West Adelaide	4

AROUND THE CLUBS

Wolves Honour Wade

By PHIL MURPHY

Wollongong City made a nice gesture to former Soccerroo captain Paul Wade recently. When Canberra Cosmos played the Wolves at Brandon Park, the home club made a presentation to Wade to mark his contribution to Australia soccer.

Wade received an inscribed tray from club general manager Graeme Haney and later gave a short speech to thank the people of Wollongong.

One Wollongong supporter had a special reason to be grateful. Wade made the trip to Wollongong after being ruled out of the Canberra side because of an injury. He drew the Wolves raffle for a new car and Sharon Marks, from Coniston, was the winner.

The car was provided by Wollongong Toyota and the raffle had been going for six months.

"It was a case of 'Adam who?' when young goalkeeper Adam Brodbeck was called into the Wolves team at the last minute against Canberra.

Regular keeper Brett Hughes pulled out of the side after suffering a recurrence of a foot injury during the pre-match warmup.

Having played in the youth league match, Brodbeck was virtually called out of the shower onto the field.

He didn't have to wait long to get a touch of the ball.

An effort from Canberra's Richard Watson tested his reflexes inside the first minute. Signed from Parramatta, Brodbeck said he wasn't really nervous when told he was in the first team.

"I told myself I couldn't afford to be nervous or I would make mistakes," he said.

"The other players were

talking to me right through the game and I really enjoyed it. To complete a big night we won."

After attracting a crowd of 3467 to the Canberra game, the Wolves are averaging a tick over 4100 for home matches.

That is an improvement on last season and the promotions and entertainment provided for fans has had a big impact.

Looking towards the second round, Wollongong can look forward to increasing their average, particularly if they can maintain their spot in the top six.

The big drawcards will be home games against Sydney United and UTS Olympic - both having the potential to draw 6000-plus crowds.

Matt Horsley's lucky number would have to be 87.

The Wolves captain has scored two very important late winners this season. It was Horsley who scored the only

goal of the game against Adelaide City and he grabbed the winner in the 2-1 success against Canberra. Both goals came in the 87th minute.

After the Canberra game, Horsley had five goals to his name and has certainly surprised the Wolves supporters. Goalscoring certainly wasn't his speciality in previous seasons at Brandon Park but coach Nick Theodorakopoulos doesn't care who scores the goals!

Sasho Dimoski has become the forgotten man of Brandon Park. Back from an injury, Dimoski has been playing in the youth team. He was on the bench for the Ericsson Cup game against West Adelaide but didn't get onto the field.

Dimoski concedes he feels frustrated at being overlooked but the Wolves have a very strong senior squad of about 18 and chances for fringe players are lim



Matt Horsley: 87 lucky for the Wolves Captain but unlucky for cricketers

FALCONS TWO FLY THE COOP

By DWYGH TUFFNELL

The Falcons may be about to lose two of their players to the professional league in China. Defender Steve Mangos and striker Alex Duric flew to China just before Christmas on the 23rd of December, for a trial with the Guangzhou Apollo club. Coach Frank Arok was hopeful that the pair would be back in time for Saturdays home game against the Brisbane Strikers.

If Mango and Duric are signed by Apollo, they could

be earning up to \$60,000 a season.

There are three important spots up for grabs at Apollo. Duric and Mangos are joined at the trials by St Albans goalkeeper Marjan Vunderl and Altona Magic midfielder Nick Georgopoulos.



FARINA ATTACKS 'EXPERTS'

By GLENN DAVIS

Brisbane Strikers player-coach Frank Farina has angrily denied he's been diving to milk penalties and lashed out at the so-called experts on the SBS program 'On The Ball'. Speaking to ABSW after the Strikers convincing win against Collingwood Warriors in their last home fixture, Farina defended the Strikers, who've been aided by four send offs against them this year and three penalties in two recent matches.

"If people keep fouling you, then they have to face the consequences," Farina said.

"I'm not diving to be totally honest and that's no b—g."

"Last year I could have had four or five penalties here which I never got. Now all of a sudden, I'm getting them and people are moaning. Sometimes they go your way and sometimes they don't."

Farina was furious at continued criticism he and the Strikers have received from commentators on the On The Ball programme on SBS television.

Farina had remained cool despite accusations from current players guesting on the show that the Strikers' Ericsson Cup success was due to "luck" which soon had to end.

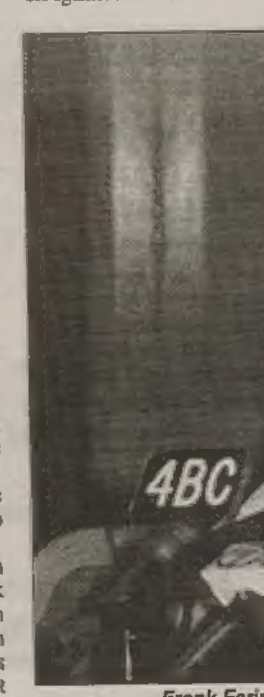
However, his frustration boiled over last week following another attack on him on the programme when it was alleged Farina's "diving" for penalties was not

in the spirit of the game and that the Strikers had been receiving preferential treatment by referees.

"People talk a lot and there's a lot of good talkers on this SBS show (On The Ball)," he said.

"They talk a great game and they talk about football and their knowledge of football. Let them talk. Half of them haven't kicked a ball or played in 30 or 40 years."

"Mate, I'm not going to stop going in for the ball. If I get hit or put off balance and fall down then what happens next is the referee's decision." Farina denied the Strikers results had been favoured by four teams having players sent off against them this season.



Frank Farina: Livid with comments made on SBS program.

Lakers Sign Goalie

By DWYGH TUFFNELL

The Lakers have signed promising VIS and Young Soccerroo goalkeeper, Peter Zois. Zois is the number two in the Young Soccerroo squad behind Canberra's Danny Milosevic.

He played last season for state league division one team, Richmond, the side who finished in third position behind Springvale White Eagles and Preston Lions in a tight scramble for a promotion place to the premier league.

With Jean-Paul Knezevic seemingly on his way to Springvale White

Eagles, Sasa Nikolic is also believe to be on his way to the newly promoted premier league team.

Last season under Frank Arok, Nikolic was a regular in the first team squad but this season he hasn't figured in any of the Lakers games.



Warriors after Palatsides

By DWYGH TUFFNELL

The rumour of Joe Palatsides joining the Warriors becomes strong as the weeks go by. Palatsides is currently out of contract in Greece where he was playing with Kalamaria.

His contract ended at the end of November but he must stay in Greece 30 days after to see if any other club is interested in signing him.

He has said that he will only play in the first division and only with one of the three Salonika clubs, PAOK, Aris or Iraklis.

"Who cares. We were beating them before they got sent off anyway," he said. Farina said all four send-offs were warranted.

"The so-called experts can say what they like. It's usually the people who do all the talking who know the least. I defy anyone to defend (Marco) Peronovic's tackle on Glen Gwynne the other week.

A send off was a small penalty the way he went in."

Farina said he would have to watch the replays to judge the other send-offs, but said there was no argument when Olympic had the keeper sent off for a handball outside the area.

"What is there to query about that? Nothing, because it is in the rule book."

Aussie Scores Winner for QPR

Nineteen year old Australian right back Andrew McDermott should have been on a plane home last week to prepare for Australia's under-20 World Cup Oceania qualifier in Tahiti.

Instead, he lashed in a late winner to keep Queens Park Rangers' mid-season surge towards the top of the first division on track.

McDermott's goal, in only his third senior appearance with the London club, gave QPR a 3-2 win over Norwich and moved it to sixth

place. When he made the first team, manager Stewart Houston asked Soccer Australia for permission to keep him in London over the heavy Christmas holiday fixture period.

He played in the 1 - 4 loss to West Bromwich Albion at the Hawthornes before flying direct to Tahiti on Sunday.

McDermott graduated from the AIS in 1995 and joined QPR without ever displaying his skills in the Ericsson Cup.

Pele, the Black Pearl

... BY BOB BROOKS

PART 2

Genoa in 1959 saw Santos taking part in a night series, remember floodlights were something very new about that period. Also in the tournament were Fulham. The West London club were then very fashionable in England's top divisions.

'Tuttosport' described Pele as the black player with 'the prehensile feet' who is able to make the ball disappear and appear in the net behind the opposing goalie as if by magic. Quite some tribute to an 18 year old.

Pele did his military training in 1959. He did carry a rifle and surprisingly pulled half a dozen games for the army. Although who the opponents, on the soccer field, were is hard to find out.

In the 'Miroir du football' of July 1960 the play of the Santos team is analysed. By this time 16 year old Coutinho, another slightly wild, black player is in the team. The understanding between Pele and Coutinho is remarkable.

The writer comments, "The most notable aspect of this metamorphosis is the development from goal scorer, which he was almost exclusively, into TOTAL ATTACKER, both as an originator and a finisher." He (Pele) excels in creating a gap with the help of Coutinho and using the 'tabella' which is the Brazilian term for 'one-two'.

Over 90,000 in the San Siro Stadium watched home Inter Milan go down 1-4 to the travellers of Santos at the end of 1961. Playing a 4-2-4 system the Brazilian machine over-ran Inter.

The description excellent, mild, sprint speed, resistance to fatigue, and a great capacity to absorb knocks, qualities rarely found in a soccer player. These all applied to the Black Pearl.

"World Soccer" of January 1961 featured Pele on the cover in close control of the ball. His defence bewildering movements are so typical.

From 'World Sports' of November 1961 Ben Wright writes that Pele's strength lies in the variety of his play. He

never repeats the same move; never dribbles the same way twice. He manages the unexpected, always improvises. At that time he was being paid about 1,250 English pounds a month. As a comparison someone of junior rank in the RAF would be getting 40 pounds a month!

At 22 years of age he launched his first autobiography 'Eu Sou Pele' which sold all over the world in various languages. In his early 20s he was asked and agreed to advertise a children's tonic. The Brazilian government employed him to advertise coffee from his home country but despite fabulous offers he refused to be associated with cigars or alcohol, "because as an athlete I should set an example."

That athleticism was always in evidence after he scored a goal as he leaped skywards. This was forever his trademark, celebration. The sheer joy and pleasure of scoring another goal. Another writer, this time for the magazine 'World Sports' in November 1961, said that Pele is an excellent dribbler; he is very quick in his tackles; he can shoot equally well with either foot; he makes passes with unequalled precision, and, although not tall, he heads the ball excellently.

Ben Wright the magazines Brazil correspondent adds that "Pele's personality has not been influenced by the wealth he now enjoys. He is a good son to his parents. Although he has a yacht, a mansion to live in and a good car, (remember this was 1961), he still enjoys training with his fellow players along the beaches of Santos."

His personal code for living were that you must be polite and nice to everyone; be responsible and honest; take care of your money; always try to improve yourself; work hard and most of all, be humble; and remember God gave you talent to be developed and used for good things only. A number of the highly talented players of today would do well to have some parts of these beliefs in their behaviour and belief systems.



Santos in 1962

The third, World Interclub Championship took place in 1962 with Santos taking the title after a 3-2 victory in Sao Paulo over Portuguese club Benfica. Amazingly the Brazilian masters travelled to Europe and beat Benfica 5-2. In that game Pele scored a hat-trick with Coutinho and Pepe chiming in. The masterful Eusebio and team mate Santana got the Lisbon team's consolation.

This new honour came to Santos in October of 62 following Brazil's victory in the World Cup held in Chile. Pele missed most of the finals due to a leg injury sustained in a generally tough competition. Nevertheless Brazil came through 3-1 against Czechoslovakia to retain the Jules Rimet trophy won four years before in Sweden.

In that Intercontinental Final match in Lisbon, at the age of 22, Pele claimed his 500th goal. A reporter for renowned Italian sports paper 'La Gazzetta dello Sport' said at the time, "Finally to talk of

tactics when you have Pele on your side, is a waste of time. Tactics are of crucial importance in ninety nine cases out of a hundred: the hundredth is the one that involves the amazing Pele."

All the emotion which is released on the field at the end of the final in an important tournament, is described so well by Pele, when Brazil had just become Champions of the World - "I had a strange feeling I was going to faint. I felt my knees collapsing under me and reached out to prevent myself hitting the ground; and then I was being lifted, raised on the shoulders of my team mates and being carried around the field."

Everyone was crying, tears streamed from my eyes as I hung on wildly. We marched around the field with the crowds, in the stands, on their feet, cheering us. The tears continued to flow, leaving trails in the sweat that still covered our faces."

On a different slant but still to do with tears. When Santos were on tour in Senegal, in

Africa, Pele says he was in rare form. Twice within the first ten minutes he fooled the goalie making him go the wrong way, dribbling around him and rolled the ball into the net. Suddenly after the second goal the keeper raised his hand for the referee. Pele realised the unfortunate one was crying as if his heart would break. He walked off the field completely dispirited and still crying uncontrollably. A replacement custodian had to be found before the game could continue.

Certainly high drama is part and parcel of the game. Doubtless Pele reduced other goalies and defenders to tears on many occasions but rarely to such extremes as in that game in Senegal.

The year 1962 brought the Black Pearl 71 goals. 61 for his club, eight for the international side and two for a team called the 'Unionist of Sao Paulo'.

He scored two more goals in 1963 with 66 in 52 games for Santos. This was the year

when the highly respected Eric Batty writing in January's edition of 'World Soccer' selected Santos as his Number 1 in his Top Ten.

He wrote of Santos, they give the impression of a group of eager schoolboys all anxious to show off, all out to prove that they as individuals can do anything their colleagues are capable of.

Pele was now in great demand all over the world, except perhaps the USA. He even signed a substantial contract to advertise toothpaste in Czechoslovakia! A film called 'King Pele' was made about him.

Santos wrested the mantle of world's best team from the superb Real Madrid during this period. No less than 73 clubs were registered in Brazil by early 1963.

The French magazine 'Miroir du football' in May 63 had a picture of Pele on the cover. So well known was his face that the cover had no need to identify him.

On May 7, 1963 in Hamburg, Germany, Pele

almost met his maker when the taxi that Zito, Djalma Santos and the greatest player the world had seen was crushed by a bus. All three Brazil internationals were injured. The accident came a day after West Germany had been downed 2-1. Coutinho and Pele got the South American's goals.

Barbara Anne Taylor was given an assignment by the (London) Daily Express a day later, "Go and see Pele. The man with the fabulous footwork, the twinkling toes". She was distracted by his, 'big, doleful polished amber eyes, side swivelling to an alarming angle, you forget all about the extremities!'

Barbara Anne established that his only indulgences despite the big earning were jazz and samba records. Otherwise as he says, "I try to help people ... give to charity ... and all that sort of thing."

As she says the liquid eyes shine, all little-boy-lost, but she manages to d-r-a-g her eyes away and take a peek at the feet. They are tiny! She asks her readers (or editor), satisfied?

Brian Glanville writing in 'World Soccer' of July '63 concluded that 'great individuals make for great teams! He highlighted the Hungarians with Puskas and Kocsis,

Brazil with Didi and Pele and then Real Madrid with Di Stefano as examples. Who can argue?

(to be continued)



PLAYER PROFILES

Compiled by JODEE ROGERS

STAR PROFILE PAUL TRIMBOLI



SOUTH MELBOURNE LAKERS

DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH:
25/2/69, Melbourne
PREVIOUS CLUB(S) AND SEASONS:
Brighton 1985, Sunshine 1987, AIS 1986, South Melbourne 1988 -
JUNIOR CLUB(S) AND SEASONS:
Brighton 1976-1984
HOW DID YOU COME TO BE AT SOUTH MELBOURNE?
I was signed by Brian Garvey at the beginning of 1988.
CURRENT POSITION:
Striker
NICK NAME:
Trimmers
BEST ASPECT OF YOUR GAME:
Making the final pass to create goal scoring opportunity
FAVOURITE OVERSEAS PLAYER:
Robbie Fowler because he is a great goal scorer
WHAT QUALITIES MAKE A GOOD COACH:
Communication with the players, honesty and good knowledge of the game
REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS:
National Team, 21 Caps 6 Goals
AMBITIONS FOR 1996/97 SEASON:
Win the Championship with South Melbourne and play in the World Cup qualifiers
MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT:
Winning the 1990/91 Championship with South
BEST GOAL YOU'VE SEEN SCORED:
Diego Maradona v England, 1986 World Cup Quarter Final
SPECIAL ADVICE TO YOUNG PLAYERS:
Practise the basics and believe in yourself
WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT PLAYING FOR SOUTH MELBOURNE:
There are many good things including the best supporters in the country and the best stadium
RELATIONSHIP STATUS:
Single
OCCUPATION:
Accountant

STAR PROFILE MICHAEL CURCIJA



SOUTH MELBOURNE LAKERS

DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH:
27/6/77, Melbourne
PREVIOUS CLUB(S) AND SEASONS:
AIS (1)
JUNIOR CLUB(S) AND SEASONS:
Bulleen (2), Heidelberg (3)
HOW DID YOU COME TO BE AT SOUTH MELBOURNE?
Frank Arok brought me from the AIS.
CURRENT POSITION:
Striker
NICK NAME:
Curcija
BEST ASPECT OF YOUR GAME:
Finishing and vision
FAVOURITE OVERSEAS PLAYER:
Robbie Fowler because he is all class
WHAT QUALITIES MAKE A GOOD COACH:
Communication with players
REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS:
AIS for one year, U20 National Team, U23 National Team
AMBITIONS FOR 1996/97 SEASON:
To win the championship with South Melbourne and to be successful with the Australian Youth Team
MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT:
First NSL goal v West Adelaide and First Australian Youth Team Game
BEST GOAL YOU'VE SEEN SCORED:
Van Basten 1988 European Championship Final v Russia
SPECIAL ADVICE TO YOUNG PLAYERS:
Listen to good advice and work hard
WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT PLAYING FOR SOUTH MELBOURNE:
Supporters and professionalism
RELATIONSHIP STATUS:
Single
OCCUPATION:
Soccer Player Full Time

STAR PROFILE BILL DAMIANOS



SOUTH MELBOURNE LAKERS

DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH:
18/4/77, Melbourne
PREVIOUS CLUB(S) AND SEASONS:
Yarraville, Sunshine George Cross
JUNIOR CLUB(S) AND SEASONS:
Yarraville
HOW DID YOU COME TO BE AT SOUTH MELBOURNE?
Through myself by trailing for the Youth Team
CURRENT POSITION:
Midfield
NICK NAME:
Destroyer
BEST ASPECT OF YOUR GAME:
Vision and skill
FAVOURITE OVERSEAS PLAYER:
Ronaldinho
WHAT QUALITIES MAKE A GOOD COACH:
Knowledge of the game and good communication
REPRESENTATIVE HONOURS:
Victoria and Young Socceroos
AMBITIONS FOR 1996/97 SEASON:
Win championship with South Melbourne and play in a World Cup for the U20s
MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT:
First National League Game against West Adelaide
BEST GOAL YOU'VE SEEN SCORED:
Van Basten 1988 European Championship Final v Russia
SPECIAL ADVICE TO YOUNG PLAYERS:
Work hard and commitment
WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT PLAYING FOR SOUTH MELBOURNE:
Crowd
RELATIONSHIP STATUS:
Single
OCCUPATION:
Soccer Player Full Time

New Group For Australia?

— BY HENRY WIZGIER —

Right on our doorstep, there are 7 footballing nations who belong to the awesome (in size) Asian Football Confederation, but who have decided to form their own additional 'regional' group, calling themselves the ASEAN Football Federation. They are made up of the following countries, with their respective current world rankings in brackets.

Thailand (50), Malaysia (91), Singapore (93), Vietnam (100), Indonesia (109), Philippines (165), Brunei (167)

They also have 3 more 'Associate Members' - Myanmar (98), Laos (144) and Cambodia (183), making a grand total of 10 in all

Okay, so these are not exactly Brazils, Germanys or even Japans, but they do play football at a serious level and, they get better with each year as the world-wide standards generally do.

But, here's the really interesting part of it. These seven countries have a total population of about 400 Millions! Most of them live in cities like Bangkok, Djakarta, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, most of them own TV sets, are consumers and more and more of them are beginning to follow the game of 'Real Football'.

BIGGER THAN SOUTH AMERICA

My suggestion is that Soccer Australia should apply to join this ASEAN group. Asia doesn't want us and quite frankly it's just too colossal anyway - stretching all the way to the Middle East. I am not suggesting that we leave Oceania, because that avenue of escape seems to have been sealed and anyway, there is nowhere else for us to go.

But just like those seven ASEAN nations we could still remain in our own Confederation while enjoying the competitive benefits of a small group of enthusiastic nations whose potential marketing audience is bigger than South America's.

Our game is struggling.

The local business community doesn't really want to touch it seriously and would rather pump their millions into football codes that have pathetic total global audiences of single millions. But that is because they are not aware that we are talking about such a colossal soccer market in SE Asia and somebody has to point this fact out to them.

Now, what wouldn't Aussie Rules and Rugby League do to get their tiny paws on all those fans? In fact, and here is the humorous part of it, Australian club rugby union games watched here by the proverbial man and his dog, are already being beamed out to that very (bemused) Asian TV audience. Some very ambitious and hopeful rugby union TV executives have had the wit to spot the potential that South East Asia offers, but how many potential rugby union fans can there be there out there? A few hundred thousands?

When it comes to soccer, we are not talking about mere potential but an established fact. The south-East Asian fans may not quite compare to the British, Italians and Spaniards when it comes to following soccer, but we do know that it's already very big and growing at a phenomenal rate.

I urge our man in Paddington, who is not renowned for taking advice from mere mortals, to get onto the blower, or fax to one Mr. Worawi Makudi, the General Secretary of the ASEAN Football Federation and put in a formal application for Australia to become a full or at least associate member.

TIGER CUP FOR SYDNEY

We know from history that those ten weak soccer nations would probably be very worried about becoming dominated by Australian teams as they were in the past. Back in 1982 and 1983 there existed a kind of south-east Asian competition called the Merlion Cup which was played in Singapore and which Australia won comfortably in its only two appearances at full-team level. But, surely if

these countries want to get anywhere in the real world of football outside of Asia, they have to be able to cope with physical teams like Australia first.

If these ASEAN members knock us back on the grounds that we are not Asian, Mr. Hill could of course throw the CONCACAF argument right at them. Neither USA nor Mexico are South American, yet these days they get invited to the CONMEBOL national Championship, the 'Copa America'.

Here is another beautiful part. These ASEAN countries would provide the right sort of material for our home-based Ericsson Leaguers. While Terry Venables is busy fixing up friendlies for his Euro-based Aussies 'Up Over', Raul Blanco could be doing the same thing 'Down Under' and preparing us for the next ASEAN Championship or 'Tiger Cup' as it is known.

But wait, there is yet more. As well as slapping in an application for ASEAN membership, Mr. David 'Fixit' Hill could apply for Australia to actually host a future Tiger Cup. Now, we are talking marketing. Surely all he has to do is bring together a group of influential Aussie businessmen, put a drink in each one's hand and go around repeating the magic words "four hundred millions" into each one's earhole. I believe we could be seeing a Tiger Cup Final at the SFS within a decade.

Raul Blanco: Could use ASEAN members as sparring opponents for his Aussie based national squad.

PAULINE HANSON

But wait, there's still more. At a particularly sensitive time vis a vis Pauline Hanson, what better way to demonstrate to the world that Australia is not the isolated, racist society it has become painted to be by some of our neighbours, than by becoming a member of our neighbourhood soccer Federation.

Unlike the politicians

who sit around trying to convince the world that Ms Hanson's is just an isolated voice in the wilderness, Australian soccer can lead the way by actually doing something to demonstrate this point. It is the only sport in Australia which can do it

David Hill could be on a sure-fire winner. If we get accepted, local soccer will surely benefit from it in many ways but the breakthrough could also

benefit all sectors of Australian culture.

If ASEAN knocks us back, Australia's representatives can say "look, we've done our bit to try and become good South East Asians but it is they who don't want us". Could the Asians really keep on about Pauline Hanson after demonstrating to the world that they, don't want to play with us? I believe that for this reason, we would get

accepted by ASEAN.

History is full of instances where sport has played a major part in achieving things where politics has either failed or become too slow. Who can doubt that sport did not play a major part in bringing down apartheid in South Africa?

Soccer has done as much as anything including culture to bring Europe closer together.

The most recent ASEAN Championship was played in Singapore back in September and was won by Thailand.

Group A			
Cambodia	1	Vietnam	3
Laos	1	Indonesia	5
Laos	1	Vietnam	1
Myanmar	5	Cambodia	0
Myanmar	1	Vietnam	4
Indonesia	3	Cambodia	0
Cambodia	0	Laos	1
Indonesia	6	Myanmar	1
Indonesia	1	Vietnam	1
Laos	2	Myanmar	4

INDONESIA	4	3	1	0	15	3	10
VIETNAM	4	2	2	0	9	4	8
Myanmar	4	2	0	2	11	12	6
Laos	4	1	1	2	5	10	4
Cambodia	4	0	0	4	1	12	0

Group B			
Singapore	1	Malaysia	1
Philippines	0	Thailand	5
Malaysia	7	Philippines	0
Singapore	3	Brunei	0
Thailand	6	Brunei	0

Singapore	3	Philippines	0
Brunei	1	Philippines	0
Thailand	1	Malaysia	1
Malaysia	6	Brunei	0
Singapore	0	Thailand	1

THAILAND	4	3	1	0	13	1	10
MALAYSIA	4	2	2	0	15	2	8
Singapore	4	2	1	1	7	2	7
Brunei	4	1	0	3	1	15	3
Philippines	4	0	0	4	0	16	0

☆☆☆

Semi-Finals			
Indonesia	1	Malaysia	3
Thailand	4	Vietnam	2

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Final			
Thailand	1	Malaysia	0



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BRADFORD

CITY



WORLD RESULTS & TABLES

England Boxing Day Premier League

Aston Villa	0	Chelsea	2
Blackburn	1	Newcastle	0
Leeds	1	Coventry	3
Liverpool	1	Leicester	1
Middlesbrough	4	Everton	2
Nottingham Forest	0	Manchester United	4
Sunderland	2	Derby	0
Tottenham	3	Southampton	1

Division 1

Bradford	1	Sheffield United	2
Grimsby	1	Bolton	2
Ipswich	3	Crystal Palace	1
Manchester City	0	Port Vale	1
Oldham	P	Birmingham	P
Portsmouth	0	Swindon	1
Queens Pk Rang	3	Norwich	2
Reading	2	West Bromwich	2
Southend	0	Charlton	2
Stoke	1	Barnsley	0
Tranmere	1	Huddersfield	1
Wolverhampton	3	Oxford	1

Division 2

Blackpool	P	Burnley	P
Bournemouth	1	Bristol Rovers	0
Bristol City	3	Shrewsbury	2
Bury	P	Crewe	P
Chesterfield	P	Rotherham	P
Gillingham	1	Luton	2
Millwall	0	Peterborough	2
Plymouth	1	Brentford	4
Watford	0	Notts County	0
Wrexham	2	Stockport	3
Wycombe	0	Walsall	2
York	P	Preston	P

Division 3

Barnet	1	Mansfield	1
Brighton	1	Colchester	1
Cambridge	P	Scunthorpe	P
Cardiff	2	Torquay	0
Carlisle	1	Hartlepool	0
Chester	P	Rochdale	P
Doncaster	1	Scarborough	2
Fulham	1	Exeter	1
Hereford	0	Swansea	1
Hull	2	Lincoln	1
Leyton Orient	2	Northampton	1
Wigan	P	Darlington	P

Scotland Boxing Day Premier Division

Dundee United	2	Motherwell	0
Dunfermline	2	Hearts	3
Hibernian	0	Kilmarnock	1
Rangers	4	Raith	0

Division 1

East Fife	0	St Mirren	3
Greenock Morton	2	Clydebank	2
Partick	2	Dundee	2
St Johnstone	3	Falkirk	1

Division 2

Ayr	P	Hamilton	P
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Division 3

Albion	P	Forfar	P
Arbroath	2	Ross County	1

ENGLAND Premier League

Arsenal	2	Aston Villa	2
Chelsea	2	Sheffield Wednesday	2
Coventry	3	Middlesbrough	0
Derby	0	Blackburn	0
Everton	1	Wimbledon	3
Leicester	2	Nottingham Forest	2
Manchester United	1	Leeds	0
Newcastle	7	Tottenham	1
West Ham	2	Sunderland	0

Liverpool	20	11	6	3	37	1939
Manchester United	20	10	7	3	42	2537
Arsenal	20	10	7	3	37	2037
Wimbledon	19	11	4	4	33	2337
Newcastle	20	10	4	6	35	2234
Aston Villa	20	10	4	6	29	1934
Chelsea	20	8	8	4	32	2932
Everton	20	7	7	6	29	2728
Sheffield Wednesday	20	6	10	4	21	2228
Tottenham	20	8	4	8	22	2628
Derby	20	5	8	7	20	2523
Leicester	20	6	5	9	20	2723
Sunderland	20	6	5	9	19	2823
Coventry	20	5	7	8	20	2522
Leeds	20	6	4	10	16	2422
West Ham	19	5	6	8	18	2521
Middlesbrough	20	4	6	10	25	3818
Blackburn	19	3	8	8	17	2217
Southampton	19	4	4	11	28	3618
Nottingham Forest	20	2	8	10	18	3614

Division 1

Barnsley	2	Manchester City	0
Bolton	3	Southend	1
Charlton	0	Wolverhampton	0
Huddersfield	2	Ipswich	0
Huddersfield	2	Ipswich	0
Norwich	2	Bradford	0
Oxford United	2	Reading	1
Port Vale	0	Portsmouth	2
Sheffield United	2	Oldham	2
West Bromwich	4	Queens Park Rangers	1
Abandoned. Swindon v Grimsby		Swindon were leading 1-0 when match was abandoned due to icy pitch.	

Bolton	26	13	10	3	53	3648
Barnsley	25	13	8	4	44	2747
Sheffield United	26	13	7	6	44	2846
Wolverhampton	25	11	7	7	34	2340
Crystal Palace	25	10	9	6	49	2739
Oxford United	26	10	7	9	37	2937
Queens Park Rangers	26	10	7	9	35	3537
Stoke	23	10	7	8	31	3137
Port Vale	26	9	10	7	29	2637
Norwich	25	10	6	9	34	3636
West Bromwich	25	7	12	6	42	4033
Swindon	25	10	3	12	35	3233
Ipswich	26	8	9	9	33	3733
Tranmere	25	9	6	10	32	3233
Portsmouth	26	9	6	11	30	3133

Charlton	25	10	3	12	26	3333
Birmingham	23	8	9	6	24	2233
Huddersfield	26	8	8	10	30	3432
Reading	26	7	8	11	28	3729
Oldham	25	6	9	10	28	3127
Manchester City	25	8	2	15	27	4026
Southend	26	5	10	11	25	4625
Bradford	26	5	8	13	23	4223
Grimsby	24	5	7	12	26	4422

Division 2

Burnley	5	Gillingham	1
Crewe	2	Bournemouth	0
Preston	0	Bristol City	2
Rotherham	1	Bury	1
Shrewsbury	2	York	0

Division 3

Darlington	1	Leyton Orient	1
Exeter	2	Cardiff	0
Hartlepool	2	Hereford	1
Northampton	2	Barnet	0
Scarborough	1	Brighton	1
Scunthorpe	2	Wigan	3
Torquay	0	Cambridge United	1

Division 2

Brentford	25	13	8	4	41	2547
Luton	24	14	4	8	43	2646
Bury	24	11	9	4	36	2342
Millwall	25	11	8	6	33	2641
Stockport	25	11	8	6	32	2741
Bristol City	25	11	7	7	43	2840
Burnley	25	12	4	9	38	2840
Crewe	24	13	1	10	34	2740
Walford	24	9	12	3	25	1939
Wrexham	23	10	8	5	31	2738
Chesterfield	23	11	5	7	23	1838
Shrewsbury	26	8	8	10	34	4032
Walsall	24	8	8	10	28	2830
Bournemouth	26	8	6	12	23	3130
Bristol Rovers	25	7	8	10	26	2929
Preston	25	8	5	12	24	2929
York	24	8	5	11	24	3429
Blackpool	24	6	10	8	25	2728
Peterborough	25	6	9	10	37	4327
Plymouth	25	6	9	10	29	3827
Gillingham	26	7	6	13	25	3627
Wycombe	25	6	5	14	22	3823
Notts County	24	5	7	12	15	2622
Rotherham	24	3	8	13	20	3617

Division 3

Fulham	25	16	5	4	40	1853
Carlisle	26	15	7	4	40	2452
Cambridge United	25	14	5	6	37	3047
Wigan	24	13	5	6	43	2844
Swansea	25	11	5	9	28	2738
Northampton	26	10	7	9	36	2937
Cardiff	24	11	4	9	28	2637
Chester	23	10	6	7	27	2536
Hull	25	8	11	6	25	2735
Colchester	25	7	13	5	36	3034
Scunthorpe	25	10	4	11	36	3734
Scarborough	25	8	10	7	33	3234
Torquay	26	10	4	12	26	2934
Barnet	25	8	9	8	25	2233
Leyton Orient	25	8	8	9	22	2232
Lincoln	25	8	7	10	31	3831

Hartlepool	25	9	4	12	30	3231
Exeter	26	8	6	12	26	3530
Rochdale	23	7	8	8	29	2929
Mansfield	24	6	11	7	25	2529
Doncaster	24	7	3	14	26	3824
Darlington	25	6	5	14	34	4523
Hereford	26	6	5	15	26	3823
Brighton	26	4	6	16	23	4816

Note Brighton deducted two points due to pitch invasion.

SCOTLAND Premier Division

Aberdeen	1	Hibernian	1
Celtic	4	Dunfermline	2
Hearts	4	Motherwell	1
Raith	0	Dundee United	1

Rangers	19	15	2	2	50	1747
Celtic	17	11	3	3	39	1836
Aberdeen	20	8	6	6	32	2630
Dundee United	20	7	6	7	22	1927
Hearts	20	7	6	7	27	3027
Hibernian	20	6	5	9	22	3023
Dunfermline	19	6	5	8	29	4023
Kilmarnock	18	6	2	10	25	3320
Motherwell	20	4	6	10	20	3318
Raith	19	4	3	12	15	3515

Division 1

Dundee	6	East Fife	0
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St Johnstone	19	14	2	3	40	944
Dundee	20	9	7	4	28	1234
Airdrieonians	19	8	8	3	31	1932
St Mirren	18	9	3	6	29	2330
Greenock Morton	19	7	6	6	22	1827
Falkirk	18	8	3	7	18	1827
Partick	18	6	7	5	27	2125
Clydebank	19	5	3	11	18	3018
Stirling	19	3	5	11	21	3714
East Fife	19	1	4	14	11	567

Division 2

Berwick	1	Ayr	2
Brechin	2	Dumbarton	1

Livingston	18	12	4	2	30	1440
Ayr	18	12	2	4	32	2038
Hamilton	17	10	4	3	34	1434
Clyde	17	7	5	5	22	2026
Stenhousemuir	17	6	5	6	23	1323
Queen of South	18	6	5	7	28	3223
Brechin	19	4	7	8	20	2719
Stranraer	18	5	4	9	16	2519
Dumbarton	19	4	5	10	22	3617
Berwick	19	1	5	13	18	448

Division 3

Inverness Thistle	18	10	5	3	32	2135
Ross County	19	9	3	7	30	2530
Montrose	19	9	3	7	32	3030
Alloa	17	8	4	5	27	2329
Forfar	18	7	4	5	29	2525
Cowdenbeath	18	7	3	8	24	2224
Albion	17	6	6	5	21	1924
Queen's Park	18	5	5	8	26	3120
Arbroath	18	3	6	9	15	2715
East Stirling	18	3	5	10	15	2814

SERIE A REPORT

by LANCE LIBRANDI

Atlanta 4 (Inzaghi 16, 32, Rotella 55, Sgro 63), Piacenza 0

Atlanta performed a demolition job on hapless Piacenza, with their form striker notching the first two goals and taking his tally this season to 10. He also set up the other two goals in a best-on-ground performance, which will help lift Atlanta's spirit and rise out of the relegation area. Piacenza have now slid further down the ladder to 13th.

☆☆☆
Cagliari 2 (Muzzi 20, Paucaro 23 pen), Bologna 2 (Kolyvanov 13, Scapolo 33)
An amazing first half in Cagliari saw four goals and the two sides share the points. Cagliari keeper Pascolo had a bad day, possibly preventing his team from winning the game with some unfortunate errors. Muzzi and Kolyvanov were the best players on the day for their respective teams, as Bologna fall away from the leaders a touch, and Cagliari still near the bottom of the Serie A.

Inter 3 (Branca 12, 46, Berti 42), Sampdoria 4 (Montella 7, 56, Franceschetti 85, Mancini 90)

Another exciting game, this time in Milan where high-flying Inter raced to a 3-1 lead by the 46th minute. What should have been a comfortable home victory turned into a nightmare when Sampa piled on three more goals, Mancini scoring the winner in the last minute, to snatch the game. Sampdoria had contributors all over the ground and deserved to win after maintaining pressure on Inter right up until the final whistle.

☆☆☆
Juventus 3 (Porrini 45, Del Piero 64 pen, 72), Verona 2 (Maniero 24, 43)
This was Juve's seventh consecutive victory, between league and cup matches, but it wasn't without drama. The league leaders were in trouble early on, two goals down to unfancied Verona and looking at an upset loss in front of their home fans. However, a goal to Juve midfielder Porrini saw the pendulum swing their way, and in the second half, the gifted Del Piero took over. He scored the leveller and then

converted a penalty to take the game and increase their lead at the top of the table. This fightback just adds to the feeling that this could be the season of the black-and-white.

☆☆☆
Perugia 1 (Gauteri 78), Lazio 2 (Rambaudi 71, Signori 80 pen)
Lazio star Signori bounced back from a form slump to stamp his mark on this game. He set up Rambaudi for the opener, then won and converted a late penalty to decide the outcome. Perugia were unlucky to lose, and the strain was too much for their coach Galeone. He received a red card from the referee for his protests in the 60th minute as his team conceded the points. Lazio have now linked three wins in a row and march up into the top half of the Serie A.

☆☆☆
Reggiana 0, Milan 3 (Albertini 3, 70 pen, 78 pen)
Inconsistent Milan, minus the suspended Costacurta, killed off Reggiana thanks to a rare hat-trick by National midfielder Albertini. Two of his goals came from spot-

kicks awarded in the second half, to decisively finish a game where Milan still do not look like the team that was almost invincible last season. New coach Sacchi was still pleased with the win away from home, but his side now face some weeks without their Liberian striker Weah, who is suspended by the UEFA. Reggiana still are without a win this season.

☆☆☆
Roma 1 (Aldair 78), Napoli 0
Brazilian defender Aldair burst Napoli's bubble with the deciding goal at the Stadio Olimpico. 55,000 fans witnessed his clash, with the Neapolitans on a roll in recent weeks. Napoli keeper Tagliatela had an excellent game, saving a penalty from Delvecchio and keeping his side in touch until the end. Napoli's only defensive error unfortunately cost them the game - had they won, they would have been in equal second place on the table. They are now on equal points with Roma on 20.

WORLD STORIES

United Fired By Cole

Andy Cole the fallen star of English football, burst back into the limelight with a superb goal in Manchester United's 4-0 destruction of Nottingham Forest on Boxing Day.

Cole, who has not started a game for United since their FA Cup Final triumph last May, came off the substitutes' bench to score his side's fourth in a victory that put United firmly back in the title race.

Goals from David Beckham, Nicky Butt and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer set United on their way to victory but it was the performance of the much-ridiculed Cole which brought United manager Alex Ferguson the greatest amount of pleasure.

Cole has had a difficult time since signing from Newcastle two years ago for a then British record. He lost his goalscoring touch last season

and this year he has suffered a bout of pneumonia in the northern summer before sustaining a broken leg in a reserves game in October.

However Ferguson believes the former Arsenal reject is back to his sharpest after watching him rifle a 20 yard drive into the back of the Forest net.

It took a goal from Stan Collymore 10 minutes from time to salvage a point for Liverpool after Steve Claridge had given Leicester the lead.

Leicester's Colin Hill did a superb man-marking job on England winger Steve McManaman and Liverpool, crucially, has now picked up just nine points from a possible 18 at Anfield.

Arsenal wasted a chance to close the gap on Liverpool by battling out a goalless draw with Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough.

Newcastle's poor run was extended to seven matches

without a win as Kevin Keegan's men slumped to a 1-0 defeat at struggling Blackburn, whose mini-revival continued thanks to a goal from Kevin Gallacher.

Newcastle boss Keegan, who saw Alan Shearer fail to get a single

effort on target on his return to the club he quit for the North East, struggled to talk up his side's performance.

Troubled Middlesbrough boss Bryan Robson said he was relieved after seeing his expensively assembled side win their first Premiership match since September with a 4-2 victory over Everton at the Riverside Stadium.

Two second-half goals from Brazilian Juninho clinched the victory and Robson joked:

"I had forgotten what it was like to win a football match. It was nice to start the second-half of the season with a victory. I hope it is a turning



point."

Two goals from Italian ace Gianfranco Zola kept Chelsea in the title race as Aston Villa's five-match winning run came to an end at Villa Park.

Chelsea manager Ruud Gullit said he was delighted with Zola's developing partnership with Mark Hughes that looks set to delay Gianluca Vialli's return to the first team.

"Franco played really well with Mark Hughes up front and I'm very happy with him," said Gullit of the diminutive striker he bought from Parma.

Gordon Strachan marked his return to Leeds by masterminding Coventry's third successive victory with a 3-1 win at Elland Road.

It was an incident-packed match for Coventry's former Leeds players with former captain Gary Macallister scoring one of the goals and

striker Noel Whelan being sent off for a second bookable offence. Strachan, though, played down the win over the side he helped to win the championship in 1992, saying: "I get my kicks from winning, no matter who the opposition may be."

Sunderland bounced back from their recent five-goal mauling by Manchester United at Old Trafford with a 2-0 win over fellow Premiership newcomers Derby for their third victory in five games.

Tottenham had its Scandinavian stars to thank for an unconvincing 3-1 win over Premiership struggler Southampton at White Hart. Steffen Iversen, signed from Rosenborg of Norway, earlier in December, struck his first goals for Tottenham before a brilliant header by Danish midfielder Allan Nielsen sealed the match.

HAMMERS NEED MEAN STREAK

West Ham manager Harry Redknapp admitted he intended to become Scrooge over Christmas and introduce the mean streak he believes is the only way to a happy new year for his slumping team.

Hammers, without a win in nine games, are in danger of proving the old jibe that they always come down with the festive decorations.

Redknapp has made a brave attempt to embellish his team with Continental flair but will look mainly to British bulldogs like skipper Julian Dicks, John Moncur and fit-again Danny Williamson in what is fast becoming a fight for Premiership survival.

He is close to off-loading Romanian forward Ilie Dumitrescu to Mexican club

Cuadras America, just weeks after the retirement of injury-hit Portuguese striker Paulo Futre and admits: "Maybe I've ended up with too many floating players just like Bryan Robson has at Middlesbrough."

"I've got to balance it a bit now because we've got to go back to being a side that is hard to beat rather than let people show flair."

"There's absolutely no doubt that we must start getting a few clean sheets and climbing back up the table before it becomes too hard in the New Year."

But Redknapp is still without the injured Australian Stan Lazarides, Tim Breacker and Steve Jones going into the heavy schedule.

With Iain Dowie out for three months with a broken

ankle, on-loan Mike Newell will continue to lead the attack.

Former captain Steve Potts could be recalled to stiffen a

West Ham defence which will rely heavily on the strength of centre backs Marc Rieper and Slaven Bilic.



Steve Potts: Could be in line for a return to first team duty.

DAVID FROST REBUFFED

Sir David Frost has been rebuffed in his attempts to take a stake in Southampton Football Club.

In early December it was announced that Southampton will join a growing list of football club to float on the stock market.

The Premiership club is being taken over by Secure Retirement, a floated property development and healthcare company.

In a brief statement issued through the Stock Exchange, Secure Retirement said, "The board of Southampton Football Club has noted press reports of a proposal by a consortium led by Sir David Frost to inject cash into Southampton."

While it said the Southampton board was grateful for the consortium's offer of assistance, investors controlling the majority stake in Southampton were bound by an agreement to sell their stake to Secure Retirement.

Secure, which began life providing sheltered housing for the elderly, plans to

relocate the club from its famous home at The Dell to a 73 acre site to the north of the City.

The takeover, which has been agreed by the boards of Southampton and Secure, based in Thornbury, near Bristol, values the club at about \$20 million.

News that Frost's attempts at investing in the club have been shunned, came on the day investors in Premier League side Sunderland got an early Christmas present as its shares rocketed on their stock market debut.

The shares were floated at 585p and raced ahead immediately dealing got under way, jumping to 735p within the opening hour.



Japan listed World Cup venues

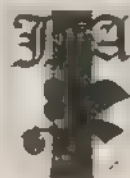
Japan's Football Association has listed the ten host cities for the 2002 World Cup, which the country is co-hosting with South Korea.

The venues chosen include Yokohama, a port city south of Tokyo, which is a possible site for the final, but Tokyo itself and Hiroshima have not been named.

The other venues are

Sapporo, Oita, Kobe, Osaka, Saitama, Miyagi, Shizuoka, Niigata and Ibaraki.

South Korea have yet to announce their venues.



NIGERIA NAMES ITS SQUAD

Olympic champions Nigeria, have named a squad of 18 overseas based players for a World Cup qualifier against Kenya in Nairobi on January 11.

Goalkeepers: Olatodu Joseph (Reggiana), Willy Okpara (Orlando Pirates).

Defenders: Mobi Oparaku (Turnout), Uche Okechukwu (Fenerbahce), Tanibo West (Auxerre), Uche Okafor (Kansas City), Celestine

Babayaro, Chidi Nwanu (both Anderlecht).

Midfielders: Austin "Jay-Jay" Okocha (Fenerbahce), Garba Lawal (Utrecht), Sunday Oliseh (Cologne), Wilson Oruma (Nancy).

Forwards: Tijani Babangida (Ajax), Victor Ikpeba (Monaco), Jonathan Akpoborie (Hansa Rostock), Daniel Amokachi (Besiktas), Finidi George (Real Betis), Emmanuel Amunike (Barcelona).

BECKENBAUER MOVES FOR BRAZILIAN

Bayern Munich have made an offer for Stuttgart's disenchanted Brazilian striker Giovane Elber, a German newspaper reported last week.

Club president Franz Beckenbauer was aware that Elber, whose contract expires at the end of June, had

received offers from Clubs in other countries, according to the article.

"We will nevertheless make a renewed offer to (Stuttgart president Gerhard) Mayer-Vorfelder," Beckenbauer was quoted as saying.

Bayern offered Stuttgart more than A\$6million for

Elber a year ago but the bid was rejected. Beckenbauer said he was confident Elber would move to Munich next season.

Elber wants a big wage increase and has said he was fed up with the slow progress of negotiations with Stuttgart.

HIBERNIAN

BY STUART JONES

Ground: Easter Road Stadium
Address: Albion Road, Edinburgh EH7 5QG
Railway Station: Edinburgh Waverley (25 min walk)
Founded: 1875
Admitted to League: 1893
Ground Capacity: 16,218
Seats: 16,218
Pitch Size: 112yds x 74yds
Record Gate: 65,860 v Hearts, Division 1, Jan 2nd 1950
Biggest Win: 22-1 v 42nd Highland Rangers, Sept. 3rd 1881
Heaviest Defeat: 0-10 v Rangers, Dec. 24th 1898
Nickname: The Hi-Bees
Colours: Green and White
Honours:
 League:
 Division One: 1902-03, 1947-48, 1950-51, 1951-52
 First Division: 1980-81
 Division Two: 1893-94, 1894-95, 1932-33
 Scottish Cup: 1887, 1902
 League Cup: 1972-73, 1991-92

History: The club were formed in 1875 and their first three grounds were also used by Hearts. They started at East Meadows, then moved to Powderhall Grounds before swapping grounds with Hearts, Hibs taking over at Powburn.

Six months later they moved to Hibernian Park (or First Easter road). Celtic took Hibs best player in 1888, then a split in Glasgow Celtic saw the rise of Glasgow Hibernian who took Hibs best players.

Their ground was threatened by developers and the take over of St. Bernard's Ground failed. So at a time when Hibs gave up, Hearts won the Scottish Cup. Two years later they found an adjacent site and were resuscitated. 200 yards away were league team Leith Athletic. Easter Road was opened in February 1893 and a few months later they gained league status. By 1896 they were strong enough to play in the Scottish Cup Final against Hearts - in the only time the final was played outside Glasgow. Their ground sloped quite badly and despite some great success, they thought about moving the whole show to Aberdeen. Further plans to build a new ground were foiled and Hibs were reluctant to develop a ground they did not own until the 1920s.

In 1922 the club got a 25 year lease on the ground and redeveloped. The pitch was moved 40 yards sideways and levelled. Hibs were among the first teams to play under floodlights in Britain, having experienced them in Europe and at Ochilview, with Easter Road's first floodlit match coming on 18 October 1954 against Hearts. The ground also held the first Scottish Cup game to be played under lights when Hibs took on Raith on February 8th 1956.

These days Hibernian play in the Premier League but real success in terms of trophies is a struggle. However they have great fans who follow them from all over the world, including in Australia and these fans knowledge of the world game is great. One such man is Fred Legget who continues to hold up the banner for the Hi-Bees in Australia.

NEWCASTLE SMASH SPURS FOR SEVEN

Newcastle United bounced back into contention to win the English premier league by thrashing Tottenham Hotspur 7-1 at St James' Park on Saturday to jump into fifth place, five points behind the title race leader Liverpool.

After failing to win in seven games, Newcastle tore the Spurs defence apart with Alan Shearer, Les Ferdinand and Robert Lee scoring two each and Belgian defender Philippe Albert adding another while Allan Nielsen's late strike for Spurs was mere consolation.

Defending champion Manchester United made it three victories in a row by edging Leeds 1-0 through Eric Cantona's penalty.

Arsenal squandered its chance of going top and dropped to third after being held 2-2 at home by Aston Villa.

The Gannets needed to win by two to go top on goal difference and, after Ian Wright had fired them ahead, they looked like achieving it when the striker prodded the ball goalwards again with Villa's Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich beaten.

Villa defender Ricardo Scimeca raced back to clear

off his line and the visitors were rewarded for some enterprising second half play by scoring equalisers through Yugoslav striker Savo Milosevic and Tobagan forward Dwight Yorke. In between Paul Merson scored Arsenal's second.

Italy's new national team coach Cesare Maldini, saw Gianfranco Zola score and then set up a goal for Mark Hughes as Chelsea moved smoothly into a 2-0 lead at Stamford Bridge.

Goals by Mark Pembroke and Dejan Stefanovic, whose equaliser came in the final minute, made sure Sheffield Wednesday stayed unbeaten

in 11 games after a 2-2 tie.

Wimbledon scored three second half goals to earn a 3-1 victory at Everton. After Graham Stuart had put the home team ahead, Efan Ekoku, Oyvind Leonardsen and Marcus Gayle hit back for the Dons.

Among the strugglers, Coventry scored a 3-0 victory over Middlesbrough for its third win in a row and West Ham downed Sunderland 2-0.

A late leveller earned last place Nottingham Forest a 2-2 draw at Leicester while second from last Blackburn fought out a scoreless tie with Derby.



Weird and Wonderful

BY STUART JONES

1895-96

For this season Loughborough Town were elected in place of Walsall Town Swifts in the second division. Loughborough Town are a club that no longer play in the football league, where they only lasted five seasons, most of them a struggle to avoid bottom spot. The Loughs did have one victory to savour over though. That, was an 8-0 thrashing handed out to Arsenal - still that great clubs record defeat.

They played in black and white and prior to this season had been well supported for a non-league side with one crowd of over 10,000 recorded.

In Division Two that year Crewe finished bottom for the second year running while nearer the top Grimsby Ardnwick and Liverpool finished third, second and first respectively. All three clubs were undefeated at home. In fact, goal difference alone handed Liverpool the title who took on Wolves, Small Heath and WBA in the test matches. Liverpool were the only team promoted after a long set of test matches with Small Heath, who had finished second last and were the only team relegated.

For the clubs of Birmingham it had been a bad season in the first division apart from one exception - Aston Villa. They, were champions for a second time, one of only two clubs undefeated at home in the top flight. The previous season's champions Sunderland, were the other. Villa, finished four points ahead of runners up Derby County who finished another two points clear of Everton.

Two clubs had interesting records that season. Out of 30 games played, Stoke City and Wolves did not draw any of them. Indeed, Stoke still ended up on 30 points after winning 12 and losing 3 at home and having that exactly reversed away from home.

In the FA Cup it was an all first division affair with all four semi-finalists from the top flight. It was Wolves and Sheffield Wednesday who progressed to the Final after defeating Derby and Bolton. The Final was played at the old Crystal Palace in front of 48,836 people and Wednesday played the same sort of tactics that had won Villa the Cup the previous season. Early on Spikesley had scored for the Wednesday but Wolves equalised. Wolves then reverted to long kicking and rushing which was easily thwarted. Spikesley scored again before half time and despite Wolves having the better of the play in the second half there was no addition to the score and Sheffield Wednesday were the FA Cup winners.

In the Southern league Millwall again took out the First Division losing only three points all season. In comparison Ilford did not get one point in 18 games, Newcomers Wolverton took out the Second Division with Bromley bottom. The first Division had been expanded to ten teams that year with New Brompton promoted and Swindon staying in the top flight. This season Reading had turned professional, all three bottom clubs in the top flight had stayed amateur.

In Scotland Celtic were champions on 30 points, four ahead of rivals Rangers. Hibernian were third.

In the Scottish Cup Final it was an Edinburgh affair with Hearts defeating Hibs 3-1 for the Cup.

Elsewhere in Europe, this was the inaugural year for football leagues in both Sweden and Belgium.

LEAGUE TABLES

— FIRST DIVISION —

TEAM	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Aston Villa	30	14	1	0	47	17	6	4	5	31	28	45
Derby County	30	12	2	1	42	13	5	5	5	26	22	41
Everton	30	10	4	1	40	17	6	3	6	26	26	39
Bolton Wand	30	12	2	1	34	14	4	3	8	15	23	37
Sunderland	30	10	5	0	36	14	5	2	8	16	27	37
Stoke	30	12	0	3	43	11	3	0	12	13	36	30
Sheff. Wed	30	10	2	3	31	18	2	3	10	13	35	29
Blackburn Roy	30	10	1	4	26	18	2	4	9	14	32	29
Preston NE	30	8	5	2	31	18	3	1	11	13	39	28
Barnley	30	8	5	2	33	11	2	2	11	15	33	27
Bury	30	7	1	7	32	24	5	2	8	18	30	27
Sheff. Utd	30	9	4	2	28	12	1	2	12	12	38	26
Nottingham For.	30	11	1	3	34	16	0	2	13	8	41	25
Wolves	30	10	0	5	43	18	0	1	14	18	47	21
Small Heath	30	7	2	6	22	24	1	2	12	17	55	20
West Brom A.	30	5	4	6	18	22	1	3	11	12	37	19

— SECOND DIVISION —

TEAM	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Liverpool	30	14	1	0	65	11	8	1	6	41	21	46
Ardwick30	12	3	0	37	9	9	1	5	26	29	46	
Grimsby T	30	14	1	0	51	9	6	1	8	31	29	42
Burton W.	30	12	1	2	43	15	7	3	5	26	25	42
Newcastle Utd	30	14	0	1	57	14	2	2	11	16	36	34
Newton Heath	30	12	2	1	48	15	3	1	11	18	42	33
Wool. Arsenal	30	11	1	3	42	11	3	3	9	16	31	32
Leicester Fosse	30	10	0	5	40	16	4	4	7	17	28	32
Darwen	30	9	4	2	55	22	3	2	10	17	45	30
Notts County	30	8	1	6	41	22	4	1	10	16	32	26
Burton S	30	7	2	6	24	26	3	2	10	15	43	24
Loughboro T	30	7	3	5	32	25	2	2	11	3	11	23
Lincoln City	30	7	1	7	36	24	2	3	10	17	11	21
Burslem PV	30	6	4	5	25	24	1	0	14	19	31	18
Rotherham T	30	7	2	6	27	26	0	1	14	7	71	17
Crewe Alex.	30	5	2	8	22	28	0	1	14	8	67	13

— SOUTHERN LEAGUE —

Millwall Athletic	18	16	1	1	75	16	33
Luton Town	18	13	1	4	68	14	27
Southampton St Mary's	18	12	0	6	44	23	24
Reading	18	11	1	6	45	38	23
Chatham	18	9	2	7	43	45	20
New Brompton	18	7	4	7	30	37	18
Swindon Town	18	6	4	8	38	41	16
Clapton	18	4	2	12	30	67	10
Royal Ordnance	18	3	3	12	23	44	9
Ilford	18	0	0	18	10	81	0

RISING STARS

Unbeaten VIS Strike Four

By ROY HAY

The Victorian Institute of Sport continued its impressive unbeaten run with a four-one win over Collingwood Warriors at Paisley Park. The VIS has only conceded four goals in eleven starts with keepers Peter Zois and Martin John in scintillating form.

Zois had to be alert in the first half as the Warriors had most of the play but failed to capitalise on a couple of one-on-one situations and numerous other breaks. The VIS pulled off a couple of smash and grab raids as Zoran

Petrevski and Lev Osman with a spectacular strike from distance gave it a comfortable half-time lead. This was extended in 62 minutes when Joe Carey poked the ball through the legs of Dean Anastasiadis, but Mile Medjedovic outjumped the VIS defence to head a good goal for the Warriors shortly after. Michael Anderson put over a teasing cross and Petrevski slid in at the far post in 76 minutes to seal the victory for the VIS.

South Melbourne kept up the pressure when it beat the in-form Sunshine Georgies by three goals to one at Bob Jane Stadium. Darryl Spiten gave

the Georgies a lead in the first half, but after the hour mark the Blues took control. Alfonzo Opaza was first to score, closely followed by George Goutzioulis, then George Tsirtis added a third near the end.

The Gippsland Falcons were too strong for Altona Gate in the second match at Paisley Park. Joe Tricarico, a VIS graduate, opened for the Falcons and Paul Byrne and veteran Billy Wright made it three before the interval. The Magic youngsters showed greater fighting spirit in the second half, pulling one goal back through Darko Todevski. Todevski had another couple

of chances to score, but squeezed one wide of the post.

Melbourne Knights fielded a star-studded line-up against Heidelberg United at the Knights Stadium with John Markovski, Adnan Cervinski, Damien Vojtek, Drago Nasteovski and Ante Deak from the first team squad all in the starting eleven. Yet it was the young Bergers who took the lead in four minutes when Elias Kyriakou's cross was hammered home by Jim Kaloudis. The Knights strode up to the other end and when the keeper fumbled Branko Bacak's cross-shot Markovski tucked away the rebound. Vojtek then played a one-two

with Markovski before putting the Knights ahead, and thereafter goals came freely. Bacak put away a fine pass by Vojtek in 19 minutes. Then straight after the break Markovski turned on a near-post corner to belt in number four for the Knights. Adnan Cervinski made it five with a deflected shot before Kyriakou ran through from what appeared to be an offside position to pull a goal back for the Bergers. Vojtek and Markovski combined and the former kept running as instructed to finish the scoring for the Knights. Kyriakou had a clear opening but failed to get his shot on target as the

Bergers kept plugging away.

Green Gully and Box Hill shared the points at Green Gully Reserve. David Maglovski scored twice for Gully in 30 and 35 minutes, but Damien Guglielmo reduced the lead two minutes later. A late strike by Mimo Orlando provided Box Hill with its share of the points.

An Arthur Tsirtsakis goal for the Melbourne Knights Colts was all that separated his team from Springvale City in an even encounter at Ross Reserve. The breakthrough came in 38 minutes and though the Colts should have been further ahead in the first half, it had to survive constant

Springvale pressure in the second to take the three points.

Finally in a reversed fixture Bentleigh Greens defeated Thomastown Zebras by five goals to nil at Kingston Heath. Chris Christakis put the Greens in front after only two minutes, then quick goals by Andrew Charalambous and Christakis again by the 21st minute had finished the game as a contest. Stefan Oter added the fourth in 49 minutes and Charalambous completed the scoring on the hour.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

Southern Division - Round 11

South Melbourne (Opaza, Goutzioulis, Tsirtis)	3	Sunshine Georgies (Spiteri)	1
Altona Magic (Todevski)	1	Gippsland Falcons (Tricarico, Byrne, Wright)	3
VIS (Petrevski 2, Carey, Osman)	4	Collingwood Warriors (Medjedovic)	1
Green Gully (Maglovski 2)	2	Box Hill (Guglielmo, Orlando)	2
Melbourne Knights (Markovski 2, Vojtek 2, Bacak, Cervinski)	6	Heidelberg United (Kaloudis, Kyriakou)	2
Thomastown Zebras	0	Bentleigh Greens (Christakis 2, Charalambous 2, Oter)	5
Springvale City	0	Melbourne Knights Colts (Tsirtsakis)	1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
VIS	11	9	2	0	33	4	29
South Melbourne	11	9	0	2	47	16	27
Gippsland Falcons	11	8	1	2	44	15	25
Melbourne Knights	11	7	2	2	34	20	23
Green Gully	11	6	1	4	22	21	19
Sunshine Georgies	11	6	1	4	17	17	19
Melbourne Knights Colts	11	6	0	5	20	23	18
Collingwood Warriors	10	4	4	2	29	18	16
Bentleigh Greens	10	3	1	6	15	22	10
Altona Magic	11	3	1	7	12	30	10
Springvale City Reds	11	2	2	7	15	35	8
Heidelberg United	11	1	2	8	19	36	5
Thomastown Zebras	10	1	0	9	13	35	3
Box Hill	10	0	3	7	11	39	3

Round 12 Results

Gippsland Falcons (Masi, Sekulic)	2	VIS (Petrevski)	1
Sunshine Georgies (Micallef)	1	Melbourne Knights (Trupkovic 3, Rajher 2, Bacak)	6
Box Hill (Orlando)	1	South Melbourne (Ailsopp 4, Opazo 4, Kostakis 2, Efsthion, Tsirtis)	12
Collingwood Warriors (Babic, Tsoumerkas, Boutsianis)	3	Green Gully (Moore)	1
Springvale City (Adones)	1	Altona Magic (Todevski)	1
Melbourne Knights Colts (Kablar, Razov, Malkovic)	3	Bentleigh Greens (Papettas, Bonito, Charalambous)	3

SUNSMART NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

Round 9 DEC 22

SASI	4	Para Hills	1
Woodville City	0	Modbury (Stephenson)	1
West Adelaide (Mesenzoff 2, Stenner, Pexos)	4	Adelaide Blue Eagles	0
Adelaide City (Barbaro 2, Pirone)	3	Cumberland United (Paice 2, Howlett)	3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Adelaide City	9	7	2	0	29	8	23
West Adelaide	9	6	1	2	25	5	19
Modbury	9	6	1	2	16	10	19
Woodville City	9	5	0	4	15	6	15
SASI	9	4	1	4	20	16	13
Adelaide Blue Eagles	9	3	0	6	15	29	9
Cumberland United	9	2	1	6	16	23	7
Para Hills	9	0	0	9	5	43	0

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE Northern Division - Round 11

Wollongong City	1	ACT Academy	1
Spencer (30)		Richards (35)	
Newcastle Breakers	2	Sydney United	0
Pillpcevic (5), Turner (56)			
Marconi Fairfield	0	UTS Olympic	1
		Alexiou (60)	
AIS	6	NSW IS	0
Tomasevic (10), Cunico (12)			
Susa (42), Sterjovski (44)			
Van Cuylenburg (73, 77)			
O.A.S.	7	Marconi Fairfield Colts	1
Barnes (7), Becirbegovic, (21,22)		Bosevski (54)	
Knipe (29), og (39), Steffanato (63)			
Sydney United Colts	2	UTS Olympic Colts	0
Krslovic (58, 61)			

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Newcastle Breakers	9	6	0	3	21	10	18
A.I.S.	8	5	2	1	17	5	17
Sydney United	9	5	2	2	16	7	17
UTS Olympic	9	5	2	2	16	12	17
Wollongong City	9	4	3	2	11	13	15
N.S.W.I.S.	9	5	0	4	15	16	15
Marconi Fairfield	8	5	0	3	7	8	15
Q.A.S.	9	4	0	5	21	13	12
Marconi Fairfield Colts	10	3	0	7	11	24	9
ACT A.S.	9	2	1	6	7	19	7
Sydney United Colts	9	2	0	7	6	17	6
UTS Olympic Colts	8	2	0	6	8	20	6



WOMEN'S WRITES

BY JANENE MAR

AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLGIRLS
IN EUROPE

The Australian Schoolgirls returned home just in time for Christmas from what was a memorable tour of Europe. The three week itinerary included travel to all parts of the United Kingdom plus a brief visit to Belgium for matches against youth international teams and top senior club opposition.

☆☆☆

3 December

Gillingham
Australian Schoolgirl
(Taylor 23, Whiddett 55, 56, 60, Cavanagh 62)
at Chatham FC

The scheduled match against Arsenal was cancelled that morning. Local league side Gillingham organised a fixture within hours. Very wet, cold and windy. Some good periods of teamwork.

☆☆☆

4 December

Belgium U/20
Australian Schoolgirls
(Small 63 pen)
at Stade Roi Baudouin, Brussels
Belgium far superior technically and handled the wet, muddy conditions much better. Aussies improved second half.

☆☆☆

6 December
Brighton & Hove Albion
Australian Schoolgirls
at Brighton
Brighton extremely physical and kicked the Australians off the park. Several nasty cuts and bruises. No yellow cards issued.

☆☆☆

9 December

Wales U/20
Australian Schoolgirls
(Small 62, Westie 88)
at Llanelli FC
Excellent display and a very even match. Winning goal scored in 88th minute. Very committed

performance. Much drier pitch.

☆☆☆

11 December

Bangor
Australian Schoolgirls
at Bangor
Best match of the tour, very entertaining. Welsh champions Bangor were excellent hosts.

☆☆☆

13 December

Cumbernould
Australian Schoolgirls
(Dugomanov 16, Whiddett 59)
at Glasgow
Good match against the Scottish

Champions. Temperature of -3°C, with snow falling during the second half.

☆☆☆

15 December

Scotland U/20
Australian Schoolgirls
at Edinburgh
Disappointed to lose this match. Only two of the sixteen Australians fully fit, struck down by either injury or flu.

☆☆☆

17 December

Cork
Australian Schoolgirls

(Westie 30, Cavanagh 39, 54)
Good performance against the Irish champion team. Played in pouring rain.

☆☆☆

18 December

Republic of Ireland
Australian Schoolgirls
(Taylor 41)
Three goals down at half time, the Australians showed a good fighting spirit to come back in the second half.

ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES
— NORTH CONFERENCE ROUND 1

Amanda Boyle (NSW) and Kelly Russell (QLD)



Kim Revell (QLD) with Bridgette Starr and Tracie McGovern both from NSW



Tracie McGovern (NNSW) gets in a tackle against QLD's April Mann



Kate Stork (QLD) fends off Kristy Mehan (NNSW)



Former teammates do battle - Alicia Ferguson (QLD) and Louise McMurtrie (NSW)



SOUTH AMERICA

— COMPILED BY MARIO ETCHART —



BOCA JUNIORS WITH A NEW COACH

Boca Juniors, the most popular club in Argentina, signed Hector "Bambino" Veira, the former coach of San Lorenzo to replace Carlos Salvador Bilardo at the helm of its senior team.

Veira was selected by Boca directors after considering several options, including the names of Miguel Bridisi, former manager of Independiente and Racing, and Oscar Washington Tavaréz, who recently resigned from giant Italian club AC Milan.

Veira, who as a player was a brilliant attacking midfielder with San Lorenzo and Huracán in Argentina, before playing in the Brazilian national league, as a coach guided Boca's arch-rival River Plate to win its first Libertadores Cup and its only Toyota Cup, both in 1986.

In 1994, after 21 years of drought, Veira took his beloved San Lorenzo to win the Argentine soccer league and, at the beginning of 1996, resigned from his post.

Since then, he was linked with several clubs from

Argentina and overseas, but Veira remained in his country waiting for the right opportunity.

Carlos Salvador Bilardo, the former coach of the 1986 Argentine World Cup winning side, resigned two weeks ago after a very poor year. Regardless of the almost 25 million dollars spent in 14 senior players, the team never reached the expectations of officials and fans.

The new tactician announced his interest in resigning former Argentine international striker Claudio

Paul Caniggia, currently living in Italy and without a club since he left Boca Juniors, and added that the doors are open for Diego Armando Maradona if he was to rejoin the club.

"I will talk with Diego because I would like to have him in the squad. He is welcome to start training with us as soon as he wants to. He knows how much Boca Juniors fans love him and how much I respect him", said Veira during a press conference held at Boca's headquarters.

Maradona was promoting

his name among Boca Juniors fans and some officials to take the coaching position, but the answer to his ambitions didn't have the expected response.

Hector Veira also said that he will be happy if Bilardo accepts the position of general director of football with the club, an offer declined by the former coach.

"Bilardo doesn't need to prove anything to anybody. His input and experience could be very important when we decide to sign new players or promote some of the younger talents at the club. I

have a very close relationship with Carlos and I don't want him to leave Boca", added Veira.

The respected tactician is well known for promoting a brand of football where the talent and the skills of his players could be expressed. But he also likes to play an aggressive game, attacking with four or five players.

"I came to Boca Juniors with a great motivation. I came here to win the championship because if you finish second with this club is like ending at the bottom of

the ladder" said Veira.

Boca Juniors is interested, after consultations with the new coach, in the services of defender Christian Traverso, who's currently playing with the Chilean first division club Universidad of Chile, midfielder Alejandro Mancuso, who could return to Boca after several seasons in Brazil, playing with Palmeiras and Flamengo, and as mentioned Claudio Caniggia.

BOLIVIA WINS CHAMPIONSHIP

Bolivar won the Bolivian Championship when they beat arch rival Oriente Petrolero 3-1 in a play-off for the country's most important tournament, and qualified for the 1997 Libertadores Cup.

It was the tenth time the team from the capital, La Paz, had won the title since the professional championship was introduced in 1977.

The tournament went to a play-off after the two teams finished level on points at the top of the six-team final phase.

Meanwhile Oriente Petrolero also qualified for the Libertadores Cup after defeating Real Santa Cruz, 2-1, in an elimination match for the second Bolivian berth in the major tournament at club level in South America.



NACIONAL THE CHAMPION IN ECUADOR

Nacional is the Ecuadorean champion after its convincing 2-0 victory over Emelec at Quito's Atahualpa stadium in front of a crowd of 40,000.

Ecuadorean internationals Osvaldo de la Cruz and Heber Chalia in the 25th and 66th minutes respectively scored the goals for

Nacional.

Nacional is the only team in the Ecuadorean national league with a policy of producing its own talent using only local players in all its squads. The champions haven't bought a single foreign footballer in its history.

IN BRIEF . . .

Gregorio Perez is back as coach of Uruguayan champion Penarol.

Perez guided Penarol to win three local tournaments, in 1993, 1994 and 1995, before unsuccessful stints with Independiente of Argentina and Cagliari of Italy.

Jorge Gonzalez, the son of former Penarol star midfielder Nestor Gonzalez will return to the club after several years in the Argentine first division.

Danubio's youngsters Zalayeta and Delgado are in Penarol's shopping list for the new year.

Meanwhile former Uruguayan internationals, striker Ruben Sosa and midfielder Marcelo Tejera will return to Uruguay while Tejera could go back to

Defensor Sporting, his previous club.

America has a comfortable lead in the Colombian national league. The "red devils" from Cali drew 1-1 with Envigado but maintained a 13 points advantage over second placed Junior of Barranquilla, who beat Independiente Medellin 1-0.

In Mexico, Santos of Torreon won the local winter league after a 4-2 victory over Necaxa in the final played at Coahuila stadium in front of 50,000 fans.

In the Argentine league first phase, Independiente finished in second place after beating the champions, River Plate, 3-1, in the last round.

Conmebol Cup champions Lanus ended in third place, equal on points with

Independiente but with a worst goal difference.

River finished with 46 points from 18 matches, followed by Independiente with 37, Lanus 25, and Racing Club with 32.

Boca Juniors was 10th, with 25 points, 21 behind its arch-rival River Plate.

In Venezuela, Eduardo Borrero replaced Rafael Santana as coach of the national team. Borrero's luck didn't work in his first game in charge when Venezuela lost 2-0 at home against Colombia for the South American 1998 World Cup qualifying rounds.

URUGUAY GOES BACK TO WORK

The Uruguayan national team, under the guidance of new coach Juan Ahunchain, started its preparation to face Argentina on January 12, 1997, for the South American 1998 World Cup qualifying rounds in Montevideo.

According to journalistic sources from Uruguay, Ahunchain will name Hugo Guerra and youngster Sebastian Abreu, both playing in Argentina for Boca Juniors and San Lorenzo respectively, as his two strikers, leaving out Marcelo Otero, suspended, and Daniel Fonseca, who so far didn't impress the new tactician.

The other option for the striking force is Cagliari's forward Dario Silva.

Ahunchain was happy with the performances of defender Washington Tais and

midfielder Nelson Abejón against Peru, but his biggest worry is the injury suffered by his captain, Enzo Francescoli.

His intention is to reinforce the midfield because, as he said "It will be where the game could be won or lost".

Francescoli, who retired injured from the game between River Plate and Velez Sarsfield, for the Argentine league first phase, is desperate to play against Argentina given the importance of the match for both teams.

The probable team to face Argentina could be the following:

Siboldi; Tais, Herrera, Montero, Sanguinetti; Saralegui, Aberjon, Moaz, Francescoli or Bengoechea; Abreu, Guerra or Silva.

PENAROL QUALIFY FOR THE LIBERTADORES CUP

Uruguayan champion, Penarol, qualified for the 1997 Libertadores Cup after a difficult and controversial 2-1 victory over Danubio in a play-off for Uruguay's second berth in the South American club championship.

Danubio went 1-0 ahead in the 17th minute when Zalayeta, after an excellent combination with fellow striker Maglionico, beat Penarol's goalkeeper Claudio Flores with a powerful drive.

Penarol, equalised through the effort of veteran and former Uruguayan international striker Carlos Aquilera in controversial circumstances. Apparently

Aquilera controlled the ball with his hand before scoring, and the referee's decision to award the goal was strongly disputed by Danubio's players.

The winner came in the 79th minute when defender Adinolfi netted with a header a perfect cross from Aquilera.

Penarol and Nacional, winner of the Uruguayan Pre-Libertadores league, qualified for the 1999 South American club championship.

Both team will face each other for the first time in 18 years, the last time Penarol and Nacional were together in the same qualifying group was in 1979.

PENAROL: Flores, Olveira, Acquirregaray (Gutierrez), J De Los Santos, Adinolfi, Pereira, G De Los Santos, Tais (Rotundo), De Souza (Gonzalez), Aguilera, Pacheco.

DANUBIO: Baleato, Ros, Fernandez (Ferraro), Carballo, Guerrero, Callejas, Podesta, Sosa (Peirano), Delgado, Zalayeta, Miglionico.



Enzo Francescoli: Desperate to play for Uruguay against Argentina given the importance of the game.

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NUDE FEMALE REF TO CONTINUE

A British female referee will be allowed to keep her job as a woman in black despite being found to have brought the game into disrepute.

Janet Fewings was suspended after she revealed she had taken showers with male players after games in a local Exeter (south west England) league.

Fewings feared she would

be banned from officiating at matches but learned last week from the Football Association, that she was being fined \$A31 after admitting bringing the game into disrepute.

She has also had to give a written undertaking not to repeat her behaviour.

She revealed her post-match routine as she attempted to highlight the lack of changing facilities for female soccer officials.



MAY

Glenn Hoddle is confirmed as the new England coach when Terry Venables steps down after Euro 96, win, lose or draw. Chelsea look to Roud Gullit to take over the reins at Stamford Bridge as an emotional farewell is witnessed at the club for Hoddle's last game in charge.

Former Man City Chairman Peter Swales dies of a heart attack at the age of 62 on May 2. Robert Chase of Norwich infamy sells his shares in the club to club President Geoffrey Watling. Graeme Souness is sacked by Galatasary after one season as he didn't lead the club to the title - just the cup!

Oxford United make sure of promotion to the 1st with a 4-0 win over Peterborough leaving season rivals Blackpool to fight it out in the play-offs. York City know exactly what they must do in the only 2nd Division game still unplayed, the re-arranged match with Brighton, to leapfrog newly promoted Carlisle and send them back to the third. Dunafermline

clinch the only automatic promotion spot to enter the Premier League with Dundee United left to the second year of play-off games in Scotland.

Paris St Germain win the Cup Winners Cup when beating Rapid Vienna 1-0 in Brussels. About 400 fans attack police in the capital with 60 arrests being made. Could they possibly have been British holiday makers?

On May 11th, Manchester United make history by becoming the first ever side to achieve the 'double' when beating Liverpool 1-0 in the FA Cup Final at Wembley. Who else but Eric Cantona scored the goal.

Llansanffraid-ym-Mechain with a healthy population of some 954 souls has a team in European competition for 96/97 as they beat Barry Town 3-2 on penalties in the Welsh Cup Final after it was 3-3 at full time.

Juventus beat holders Ajax in the European Cup Final but with inspirational captain Gianluca Vialli now a free agent, it's widely tipped he'll join Roud Gullit at Stamford Bridge next season. He cost Juve 12m in 1992. Paulo Futre joins West Ham on a 'free' from AC Milan.



JULY

Euro 96 hots up as England make the semi-final stages but lose 5-6 in a penalty shoot-out to Germany at Wembley after a 1-1 draw.

The Czech Republic beat France in the same manner by the same score although there were no goals in normal play.

Germany meet the Czechs in the final and win with a very dubious 'golden goal' with goals from Bierhoff in the 73rd and 95th minutes after Patrik Berger, now of Liverpool, put the Republic side ahead from the spot in the 59th.

River Plate beat America de Cali 2-0 in the 2nd leg of the Libertadores Cup final in front of a 76,000 crowd, they win the cup 2-1 on aggregate.



Oli Bierhoff: Put away two goals in Euro Championship final.

JUNE

The England side collectively accept responsibility for damage to a Cathay Pacific Jumbo Jet on the flight back from a friendly matches in China and Hong Kong.

Wales start their World Cup campaign with a 5-0 win over San Marino while Croatia hold Ireland 2-2 in a friendly at Lansdowne Road.

Peter Reid signs a new 3 year contract to stay as manager of Sunderland. Holland beat Ireland 3-1 in another friendly and Germany warm up for the Championships with

a 9-0 thumping of Liechtenstein.

Euro 96 kicks off in a splendid carnival atmosphere but England draw with Switzerland in the opening game. Germany beat the Czech Rep 2-0 at Old Trafford, the only win in the first four games played. Scotland earn a brave 0-0 draw with Holland in their opening match at Villa Park. Italy beat Russia with a Casiraghi double at Anfield but Steve Howey is out of the England squad after damaging ankle ligaments on a training run.

England trounce Holland 4-1 and go on to defeat Scotland where David Seaman saves a penalty from McAllister that could have brought the tartan team back into the match.



AUGUST

Newcastle United pay Blackburn Rovers \$30m for the services of Alan Shearer in the UK's largest ever transfer deal.

Football at last returns to the northern hemisphere. Opening day shocks include a 3-3 draw between Middlesbrough and Liverpool with Boro's new Italian signing Fabrizio Ravanelli scoring all three to become an instant hero on Teesside.

Graeme Souness returns to English football as manager of Southampton.

West Ham United, after heavy dealings in the transfer market land

Paulo Futre, Florin Radicioiu, Michael Hughes, to name but a few as they join Dumitrescu, Robbie Slater (later to move to Southampton), Steve Mautone, Stan 'the man' Lazarides, Slaven Bilic, Mark Reiper et al to form West Ham United 'Nations'.

Rangers go on their way to qualifying for the European Champions league by beating S Vladikavkaz 3-1 at home in front of over 44,000 fans in the first leg.

Kilmarnock head the table on the opening day on goal difference from Rangers!

Ally McCoist scores his 13th European goal for Rangers, a new club record. Glenn Hoddle officially takes over as the new England manager.



Robbie Slater: Joined Southampton from West Ham

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